

Beth Israel's Centennial Celebration

The year 1988 certainly was a time for celebrations. Beth Israel was officially organized 100 years ago, the shul on York Street was built 75 years ago, the Jewish Community Center was established 50 years ago and the state of Israel was declared 40 years ago. Jews across the globe had reason to celebrate, especially in Bangor.

Planning for the centennial celebration was under way and it was to be a social as well as religious experience. Beth Israel formed a Centennial Steering Committee to plan the year's events. The committee was made up of David Adelman, Paula Adelman, Annette Chason, Pamela B. Cohen, William Cohen, Fran D'Errico, Arnold Garson, Susan Garson, Adele Miller, Norman Minsky, Arlene Rosen, Robert Rosen, Nathaniel Rosenblatt, Susan Schonberger, Donna Stern, Richard I. Stone and Patti A. Tableman.

The first event was the rededication of the synagogue May 16. About 275 people came to the synagogue that Sunday evening to hear Rabbi Harold S. Kushner of Temple Israel of Natick, Mass., deliver the keynote address. He told the audience that the plague of the 20th century was loneliness and that the cure for that condition was a sense of community. A sense of community could be found in the synagogue and in God, said Kushner, author of the best-selling books *"When Bad Things Happen to Good People"* and *"When All You've Ever Wanted Isn't Enough."*

Schonberger, who spoke before Kushner, also discussed the theme of activities and involvement. He told the congregants and guests to rededicate their hearts as well as Beth Israel and to show a strong



Members of the Centennial Steering Committee include (front, left to right) Pam Cohen, Fran D'Errico, Patti Tableman, Norman Minsky, Paula Adelman, Annette Chason, (back, left

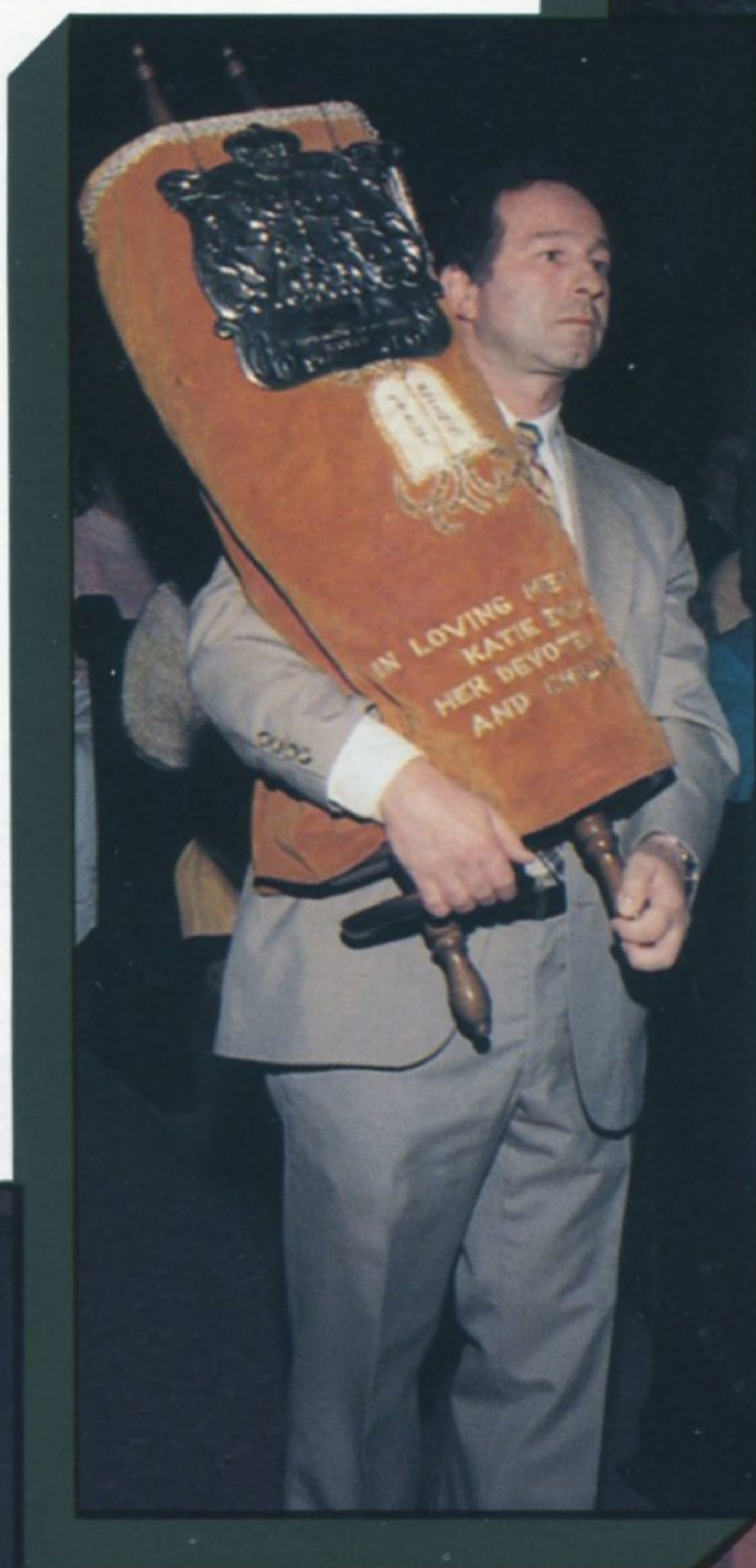
to right) Susan Schonberger, Arlene Rosen, Robert Rosen, Donna Stern, Arnold Garson, David Adelman, Nathaniel Rosenblatt and Adele Miller. (Brian Higgins Photo)

commitment by attending services regularly. He said the members could teach future generations more through example than through words.

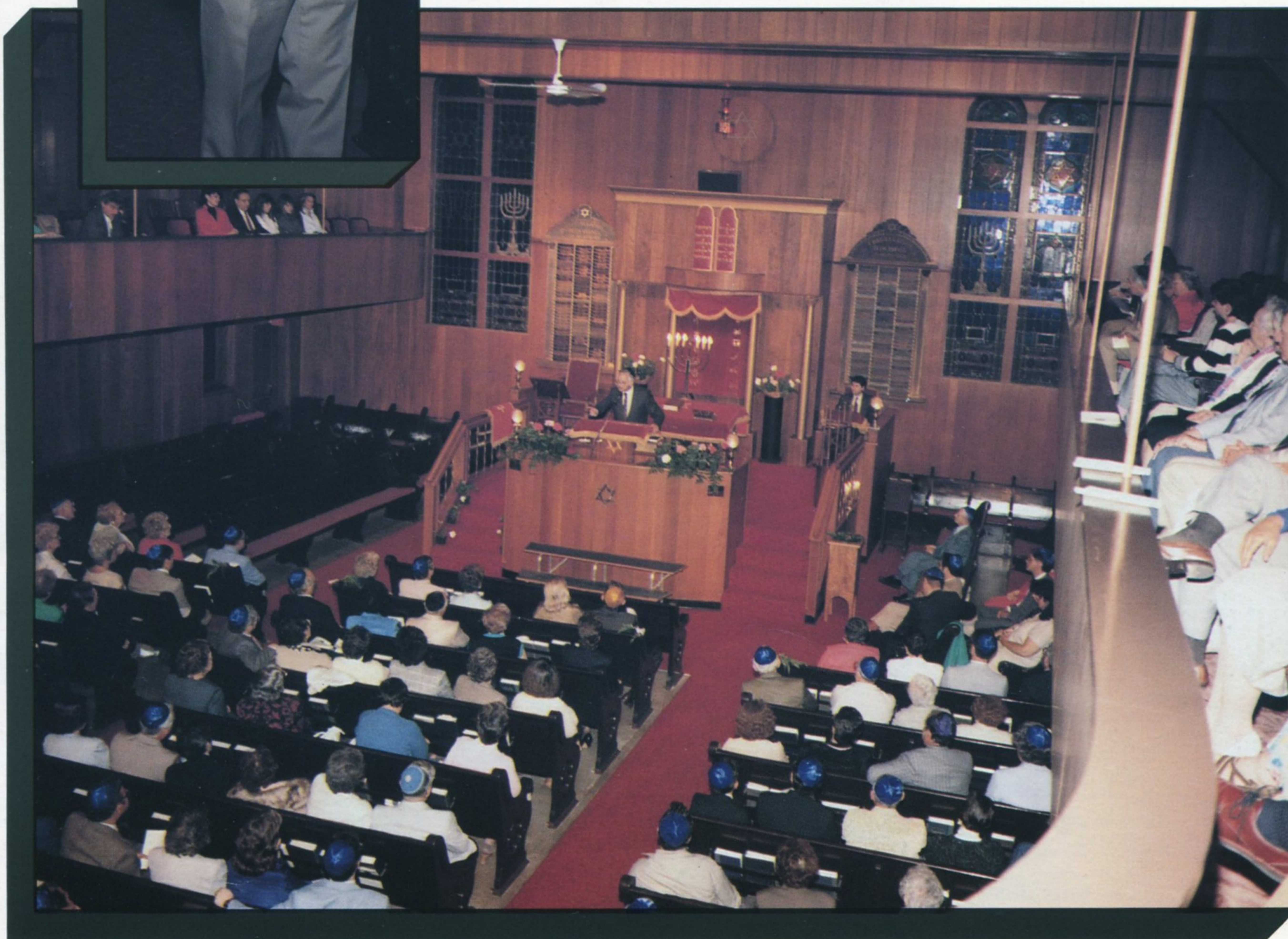
After the program, the sisterhood sponsored a reception in the vestry where members and guests could mingle and eat thousands of pastries made by the women of Beth Israel. President Minsky praised the work of Chairwomen Adele Miller and Annette Chason and the other members of the synagogue who made the evening possible. In addition to the support from the sisterhood, the Jewish Community Endowment Associates gave the shul a \$5,000 grant to help pay for guest speakers throughout the centennial celebration.

Bruce Kaley wrote in the shul newsletter that he left the event "with the feeling of having visited a friend's home, sharing a cup of coffee over stimulating conversation."

Beth Israel's rededication in pictures



Rabbi Harold S. Kushner (top photo) stresses a point during his keynote address at Beth Israel's rededication May 16, 1988. David Adelman (left photo) holds a Torah during the Torah procession, which also included Samuel Rolsky, Abraham Shapiro, Robert Fogelman, Marshall Stern, Miles Theeman and David Simonds. About 275 people attended the program (bottom photo), which was the first of many events the congregation scheduled to celebrate its centennial. (Brian Higgins Photos)



The May 16 rededication program read as follows:

Sounding of the shofar - Scott Rapaport
Flower presentation - Beth Israel Religious
School K-2 pupils
"Ma Tovv" - Scott Rapaport
Prayer - Rabbi Schonberger
Opening of the Ark - Norman Minsky
Torah procession - Samuel Rolsky, Abraham Shapiro,
Robert Fogelman, Marshall Stern, Miles Theeman,
David Simonds and David Adelman
"Eitz Chaim" - Scott Rapaport
Prayer - Rabbi Schonberger
Closing of the Ark - Norman Minsky
"Hallel," and "Shema: And You Shall Teach Them To
Your Children" - Beth Israel's Children's Choir
Welcome - Norman Minsky
Rabbi's Greetings - Rabbi Schonberger
Keynote Address - Rabbi Harold S. Kushner
Concluding Remarks - Adele Miller
"Yerushalayim shel Zahav" - Scott Rapaport

Beth Israel had successfully completed its first of many events to celebrate the centennial.

The shul's next event was Sunday, Sept. 18. Author David S. Wyman, who wrote *"The Abandonment of the Jews,"* spoke to more than 150 people at the Jewish Community Center as the first speaker in the Sylvia Friedman Memorial Lecture Series. Nathaniel Rosenblatt was chairman of the event.

The following month, more than 250 people came to the shul to hear Rabbi Chaim Potok deliver the keynote address at the 100th anniversary Convocation Sunday, Oct. 16. People came from across the state, and Rabbi Alan Kalinsky, who now lives in Los Angeles, came up for the occasion from an event he was attending in Boston.

Before Potok delivered his speech, President Minsky read an article from the Oct. 7, 1897, Bangor Daily Commercial about the opening of the Beth Israel Synagogue on Center Street. To a round of laughter, Minsky read the closing paragraph of the story: "Under the easterly corner is a granite stone bearing the inscription, in English: 'Congregation Beth Israel.' On the other side is a legend in Hebrew characters which have so far defied the utmost attacks of newspaper reporters."

Minsky also unrolled a scroll from the All Souls Congregational Church congratulating Beth Israel on its 100th anniversary. Among the signatures on the scroll was that of G. Clifton Eames, who is the grandson of George C. Eames, former treasurer of the First Church of Christ Scientist. After the 1911 Bangor fire, George C. Eames forwarded money that his church had collected to local church groups which lost their buildings in the fire. George C. Eames sent a

check for \$22.42 to Beth Israel Treasurer Max Cohen on May 22, 1911.

Potok, who is an internationally acclaimed author and educator, told the audience how reading opened his eyes to a new world. He said that from reading books he learned language could be fused to create worlds out of words.

Creating those other worlds led into his main topic of how people reacted to ideas. "We see things differently today than we did. Two hundred years ago, people lived in a small and particular world, where they learned their values. They met no strangers and were exposed to no new ideas," Potok said.

"Today," he said, "we are all inundated with new ideas, new values. They stream into our small and particular world." Potok then described how people dealt with these new ideas and values. He said that people who had deep values were unlikely to be swayed by other competing ideas. But, he added, the weaker our values, the more likely the peripheral ideas bombarding our value system would have an impact. "A person becomes a battleground of ideas," he said.

Potok's books explore these battles of ideas. Among the books he has written are *"The Chosen," "The Promise," "In the Beginning," "Wanderings," "The Book of Lights"* and *"Davita's Harp."*

William and Pamela Cohen organized the Convocation.

The celebration then moved from scholarly pursuits to comedy. The synagogue sponsored an evening with comedian Robert Klein at the Maine Center for the Arts on Nov. 5. Donna Stern was the event chairwoman.

Also in November, the congregation again participated in the interfaith Thanksgiving service sponsored by the Bangor Area Clergy Fellowship. This time, the service was held at the First Unitarian Church.

Rabbi Schonberger spoke about the courage and strength of the Pilgrims, and praised the six women who did all the work for the three-day celebration for 91 Indians and 56 settlers.

He also talked about Sarah Josepha Hale, the journalist who began crusading for a day of thanksgiving in 1821. He called it "a day to extend our arms to one another."

Jewish participation in the services was strengthened when another rabbi joined the event in 1988. Shoshana Perry, the student rabbi who serves Beth El Congregation, told those gathered the Hebrew story of the town divided by the wall. The two groups living on either side of the wall knew nothing of the other's existence.

One day, both groups happened to leave their houses at the same time to walk to their shuls. As each



Rabbi Chaim Potok looks out at the congregation after delivering his speech at the Oct. 16, 1988, Convocation. (Deena Weinstein Photo)



Robert Klein chats with Donna Stern after his Nov. 5, 1988, performance at the Maine Center for the Arts.



Sam Rolsky, Marshall Stern, Norman Minsky, David Simonds and Abraham Shapiro stand on the bimah during Beth Israel's rededication May 16, 1988. (Brian Higgins Photo)



David S. Wyman spoke to more than 150 people Sept. 18, 1988, at the Jewish Community Center.



Adele Miller, Rabbi Joseph P. Schonberger and Scott Rapaport were among the many people who participated in the May 16 rededication.

Brian Higgins Photos

group sang, the two songs rose above the wall and met at the top, where they joined and the wall of rock collapsed.

Perry said she was thankful for a "community that breaks walls down and joins together to praise God for Thanksgiving."

Truly the Jewish participation has added something special to the interfaith services and the community of Bangor.

Other events planned for the centennial celebration were a March 12, 1989, showing of "*Memories of Me*"; and a May 9, 1989, lecture jointly sponsored with the Bangor Theological Seminary to celebrate the seminary's 175th anniversary.

The March 12 showing of the movie was special to Beth Israel members and other residents of Bangor. "*Memories of Me*," featuring Alan King and Billy Crystal, was directed by Henry Winkler and Robert Rolsky of Bangor. Through Rolsky's efforts Winkler donated the film, and Hoyt's Cinema donated its facilities on Stillwater Avenue in honor of Beth Israel's centennial.

The May 9 lecture at the seminary's Wellman Commons featured Rabbi Neil Gillman, associate professor of Jewish philosophy at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Gillman, the dean of the seminary's rabbinical school from 1972 to 1981, also teaches in the adult education program at the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York City. His lecture in Bangor, which was attended by more than 100 people, was titled "*How Jews Do Theology: Metaphors for God in Biblical and Post-Biblical Texts*."

Also at the event, Beth Israel presented to the seminary's library a set of five books titled "*Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary*" in honor of Stephen Szikszai, the George A. Gordon professor of Old Testament, Language and Literature at the Bangor school. Szikszai joined the Bangor Theological Seminary in 1955 and retired in 1987.

To preserve the past, the synagogue also published a journal tracing the history of Congregation Beth Israel. Many people dedicated their time to produce the journal, which expanded on the book published by the shul in 1963.

The editorial side was headed by James A. Emple. Emple, a copy editor at the Bangor Daily News and instructor of journalism at the University of Maine, was assisted in his research by John Ripley, a reporter at the Bangor Daily News. The other contributors were Roxanne Moore Saucier, Riva Berman, Ruth-Ellen Cohen and Rick Levasseur.

The advertising portion of the book was divided into two parts. Paula and David Adelman and Susan and Arnold Garson chaired the Advertising Com-

mittee. Members of the committee were: Marilyn Braveman, Norman Braveman, Lester Cohen, Fran D'Errico, Sidney Epstein, Alan Glazier, Marjorie Goodman, Stanley Israel, Bruce Kaley, Constance Kelsey, Bernard Miller, Freda Miller, Sanford Miller, Jules Mogul, A. David Rapaport, Samuel Rolsky, Irwin Singer, Donna Stern, Patti Tableman and Miles Theeman.

Arlene and Robert Rosen headed the Memorial Committee. Members were: Marcia Braveman, Carla Cohen, Hazel Goldsmith, Adele Miller and Henrietta Rolnick.

Preparing For The Future

With the celebration in full swing, the board of directors looked toward ways of preserving the institution as it prepared for its second century. The synagogue took steps to create an endowment fund to see that the synagogue would be financially secure in the future.

President Minsky said the days when the shul relied on single contributions to erase operating deficits were over. Relying on day-to-day financing was not the way to ensure financial stability.

Richard Stone was made chairman of the Second Century Fund, which has a goal of \$250,000. By the summer of 1988, more than \$150,000 in pledges had been made.

The synagogue established six levels of recognition for people who contributed to the fund: Level 1, \$1 to \$999; Level 2, \$1,000 to \$2,499; Level 3, \$2,500 to \$4,999; Level 4, \$5,000 to \$7,499; Level 5, \$7,500 to \$9,999; Level 6, \$10,000 and above.

All contributions will be inscribed on an honor roll that will be displayed in the congregation's library. Gifts of \$1,000 and above will be recognized on a separate plaque.

Minsky said the congregation needed a secretary and a youth worker, adding that the Second Century Fund could provide for those positions. The synagogue has been able to get by without those positions because Susan Schonberger does an enormous amount of work, Minsky said. He added that the congregation should not place so many responsibilities on the shoulders of one person.

As of May 25, 1989, the following people had contributed to the Second Century Fund:

Mr. and Mrs. David Adelman, Elizabeth Bass, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Chason, Dr. and Mrs. Sidney Chason, Allan Cohen, Mr. and Mrs. Lester Cohen, Mr. and Mrs. William M. Cohen, Mr. and Mrs. David Cutler, Bertha Dennis, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Dennis, Sylvia Dennis, Mr. and Mrs. David Dorsky.

Irving Emple, Mollie Emple, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Epstein, the Schiro family, the Kagan Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Frankel, Lena Friedman, Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Garson, Mr. and Mrs. Alan Glazier, Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Glazier, the heirs of David and Bessie Goldberg.

Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Goldsmith, Jerome Goldsmith, Sam Goldsmith, Hilda Goodman, Mr. and Mrs. Michael Goodman, Riva Berman Gotlib, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Gross, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Israel, Nathan Kamen, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Keith, the estate of Jack Koritzky, Mr. and Mrs. James Koritzky.

Mr. and Mrs. Bernie Kubetz, Israel Laeger, Mr. and Mrs. David Leen, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Macoby, Adele Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Sanford Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Minsky, Norman Minsky, Mr. and Mrs. Jules Mogul and Dr. and Mrs. Irving Paul.

Mr. and Mrs. David Rapaport, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Rolsky, Mr. and Mrs. Nathaniel Rosenblatt, the family of Abraham Rudman, Mrs. Samuel Rudman, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Schnur, Peter Schwartz, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Segal, Dr. and Mrs. Ben Shapero, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Shur, Violet Shur, Dr. and Mrs. Hans Shurman.

Mr. and Mrs. David Simons, Mr. and Mrs. Irwin Singer, Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Stern, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Stone, Mr. and Mrs. Miles Theeman, Mr. and Mrs. Herb Trager, Nathan Weinstein, Mr. and Mrs. Alan White-Rogers.

Although many names of contributors to the Second Century Fund appear in this book for the first time, it should not be inferred that their contributions are limited to this one goal. Many people have contributed their time and money to improve Jewish life in Bangor in various ways. Whether it's serving on committees or providing funding for major projects, it takes participation from everybody to keep our Jewish community moving ahead.

In years past, philanthropists such as Joseph Emple and Max Kagan frequently contributed time and money to help our Jewish community grow. Although the contributions from past philanthropists remain, it takes additional work and funding to continue the progress already made. Many people have been mentioned throughout the book and others, whose names do not appear with great frequency, nonetheless should be remembered and thanked for their efforts and good will toward the community and shul.

The board of directors of Congregation Beth Israel has recognized six shul members over the years for their contributions to the synagogue. The last person the directors honored certainly deserves praise and thanks for his labors to help his fellow congregants. In the citation awarded to Samuel Rolsky in

1986, Henry Segal wrote: "As we approach our centennial year we shall pay homage to our founders and builders of Congregation Beth Israel. You, too, will be accorded the recognition of a builder in the generic sense by future generations."

Rolsky, who is a past president, treasurer and baal tefillah, is the current Gabbai Rishon. His service to the synagogue for more than 40 years is a glowing example of the type of hard work that has made Beth Israel what it is today. "The name of Samuel Rolsky is synonymous with philanthropic and educational endeavors. ... He is truly a defender of the faith," Segal wrote in 1986. The other five members honored by the board of directors are: Abraham O. Emple, Harry Epstein, Rabbi Avraham Freedman, Myer Minsky and Abraham Stern.

Expansion Plans

Building for the future meant more to Beth Israel than the establishment of the Second Century Fund. Beth Israel began taking steps for a 4,000-square-foot addition to the shul on the Adams Street side. The addition, a gift of Sidney and Helen Epstein of Bangor, will be used as a function room, while the existing vestry will be renovated to include a chapel, an all-purpose room and new office space. The single-story addition will be stylish and complement the existing building, Sidney Epstein said. Terrien Architects of Portland was selected to design the addition. Epstein predicted that construction would begin in the spring of 1989.

This gift from the Epsteins is of great importance to the growth of our synagogue. While this is a major project, it should be pointed out that over the years the Epsteins have been involved in many projects that have benefited the Jewish community. Although he remains private about his contributions to the community, Sidney Epstein has been associated with many Jewish organizations, served as president of the Jewish Community Council and played an instrumental part in the 1980 synagogue renovation project.

From its small beginnings 100 years ago, Congregation Beth Israel now takes pride preparing for its second century. With much celebration and hard work, shul members can look toward the next 100 years knowing that what is being planned now will provide the congregation with the means for a successful future.

The history of Congregation Beth Israel was written by Henry H. Segal and the Jubilee Editorial Committee in 1963. It has been updated for the centennial celebration by James Adam Emple.

The Rabbis Of Beth Israel

*By a man of understanding and knowledge
established order shall long continue — Proverbs 28:2*

Judaism as a faith is a democratic theocracy that recognized the ability of every human being to commune with God. Man and his maker require no special intermediary. Our ancient faith, therefore, has never made any distinction between rabbi and layman with regard to ecclesiastical attributes or religious obligations. Both he and the layman are equally responsible for the fulfillment of the duties placed upon all Jews by the sacred law.

The rabbinate, however, without being a special group of theologians, has, nevertheless, exercised a profound influence upon Jewish life over the centuries. The positive continuity of this way of life may well depend upon the influence exerted by the men in the rabbinate.

The real significance and the place of the synagogue can be understood all the better, if we can appreciate the character and place of the rabbi in Israel. As the custodian of the ideals for which the synagogue stands, the rabbi symbolizes the House of Assembly. He is the leader of the Jewish community and of all that pertains to community welfare. He is the social architect and is motivated by a spiritual purpose which makes it in the deepest sense religious.

The rabbi symbolizes the House of Prayer in the piety of his own personal life. Above all, the rabbi symbolizes the House of Study, for the reservoir from which he draws his inspiration is the Torah and the hundreds of tomes that serve as commentaries that are contained in the rich repositories of Jewish learning. We can take deep pride that the rabbis of Beth Israel have been men of great learning and well qualified in



expounding the higher moral and spiritual purpose of Judaism. The synagogue and the rabbi are the unifying and creative forces of Jewish life.

This section on the rabbis of Beth Israel was expanded and updated by John Ripley.

Rabbi Louis Seltzer 1903 - 1906

Rabbi Louis Seltzer, Beth Israel's first spiritual leader, had been well chosen for the post he assumed. Born in Poland in 1869, he received his education at the yeshivas of Vilna and Krakow. Both a scholar and an author Seltzer emigrated to the United States in 1903.



Rabbi Seltzer

Rabbi Seltzer gave leadership to the Jews of Bangor in the early 20th century. An effective leader, and a valiant interpreter of the old in an effort to make it applicable to conditions that were new, it was good sense that enabled him to make Jewish law the instrument with which he helped to create unity and establish a pattern of Jewish life in this new land.

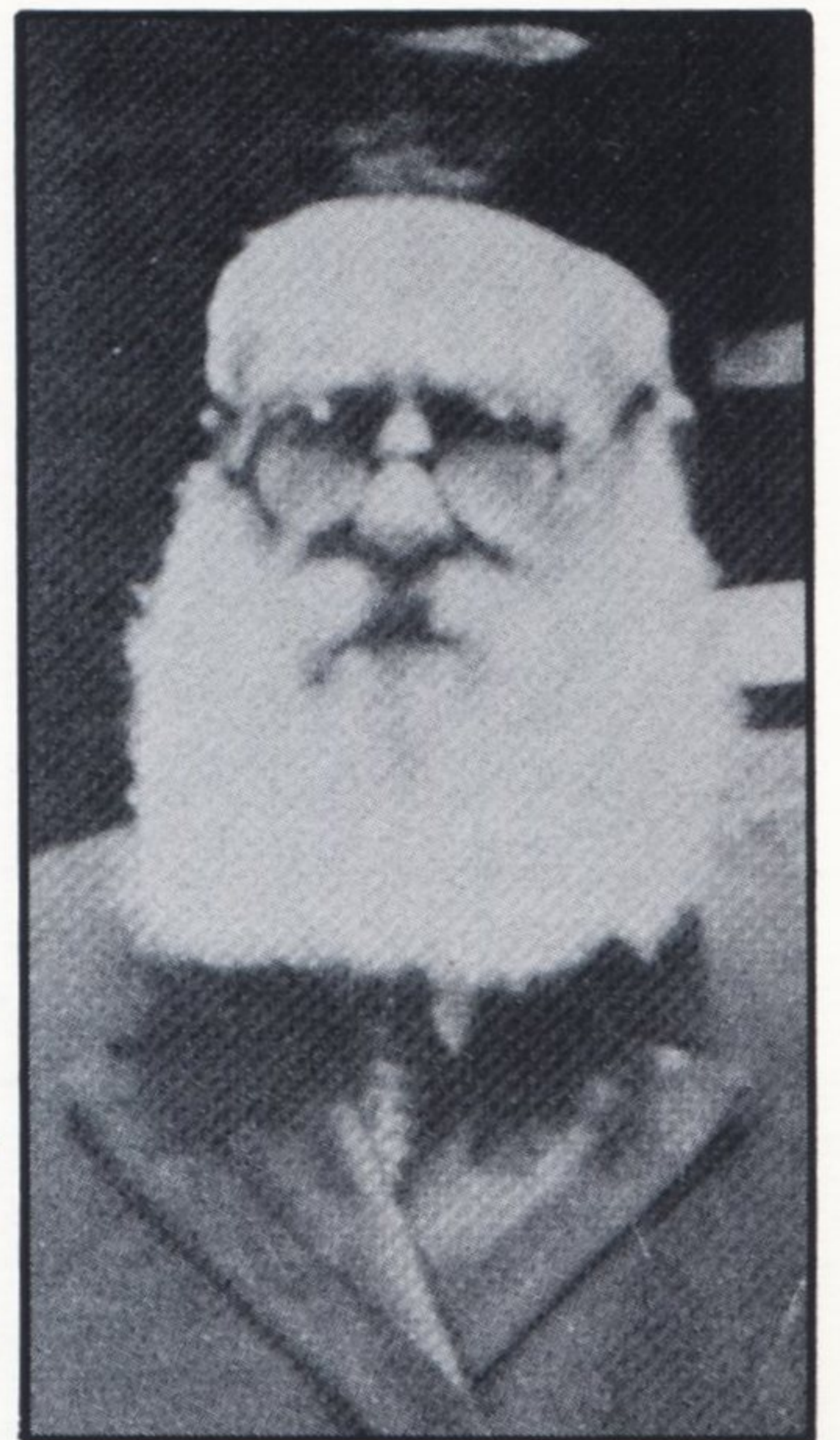
His great love for all Jews was demonstrated in the leadership he gave throughout the state to the Committee for the Relief of Russian Jews after the massacres of 1905.

Rabbi Seltzer left Bangor in 1906 to accept a pulpit in Paterson, N.J. In 1911 he left for Palestine and remained there until 1913. While there he wrote and published a scholarly work titled "*Maasa Yehouda.*" He then returned to the United States and became a rabbi of Shaarai Zedek of Minneapolis, Minn. In 1921 he answered the call of the community of Bridgeport, Conn., where he served until 1924. His election as executive director of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada brought him to New York, where he remained until 1954. In 1935 he was elected honorary president of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada. Rabbi Seltzer moved to Israel in 1954 to make his permanent home. In 1957, he published his second book, "*Vezot Leyheouda.*" He died Oct. 18, 1959, at the age of 90.

Rabbi Louis Plotkin 1906 - 1909

Rabbi Louis Plotkin was spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Israel from 1906 to 1909, succeeding his friend and colleague Rabbi Louis Seltzer. In addition

to his rabbinical duties, he also took charge of the Hebrew School and taught the classes. He was a spokesman for the Jewish community and wrote frequently for the Bangor Daily News. His articles for the NEWS on Judaism, Jewish theology, biblical and Talmudic law, problems of the Jewish people and public affairs, were collected in his book, "*Some Talmudic Gems.*" These revealed great biblical and Talmudic learning, as well as a deep insight into the contemporary world and a passionate concern for the fate of the Jewish people.



Rabbi Plotkin

Rabbi Plotkin, who died in 1942 at the age of 79, was born in Slutsk, White Russia, famed center of Jewish learning. He studied there and in Bobroisk, and became known as the Bobroisk Masmid — the diligent student of Bobroisk. He received ordination from a number of distinguished rabbis, including Reb Yankel David of Slutsk, known the world over as "Ridvaz," whose commentary on the Talmud is well-known to scholars. He was a member of the Augudas Ha-Rabanim, America's oldest and most distinguished organization of Orthodox rabbis.

An erudite Talmudist, Rabbi Plotkin was also a brilliant, inspired biblical scholar and Hebrew grammarian. In addition, he was devoted to modern Hebrew and especially to the cause of Zion. He came to America in 1891 with his wife, Sarah Shimka, a brilliant and learned woman, and became one of the earliest Zionists in the country. He was a Zionist before Herzl and the creation of the World Zionist Organization.

Rabbi Plotkin was a gifted writer and wielded a facile pen in Hebrew, Yiddish and English.

For many years after his return to New York City, Rabbi Plotkin was rabbi of Congregation Adath Jewhuran of Brooklyn. His oldest son, Rabbi Benjamin Plotkin, was spiritual leader of Congregation Emanuel, Jersey City, which he founded in 1930. He was formerly chairman of the Committee on Peace and International Relations of the Rabbinical Assembly of America and president of the New Jersey branch of the United Synagogue of America. Another son, David, became a well-known writer. The Plotkins had five other sons and daughters.

Rabbi Mordecai Klatchko 1909 - 1912

Rabbi Mordecai Klatchko was born in 1860 in Vilna, Russia, the son of wealthy parents who wanted him to follow in his father's footsteps and become a merchant. His love for learning, however, and his love of the Torah induced him to go to Volozin, the center of learning and the seat of the famous yeshiva.



Rabbi Klatchko

There he studied under Rabbi Naphtali Zwi Yehudah Berlin. Rabbi Klatchko was a prodigy at the age of 15. At 22 he received his S'micha, and also attended the Yeshiva of Bialistock and received S'micha from the famous Rabbi Samuel Molivar.

He arrived in the United States in 1905. His first position was that of rabbi in Altoona, Penn. A few years later he accepted the rabbinate in Bangor. It was while in Bangor that Rabbi Klatchko conceived the idea of writing a Sefer.

Subsequently, the Congregation of Volozin in New York City invited him to become its rabbi.

Later, as his fame increased, he was called to Boston where a special congregation was organized by the name of Chevra Shas and a beautiful synagogue was erected and dedicated as a monument to Rabbi Klatchko.

He served as the leader of this large congregation until his death in 1933 at the age of 73. He also was known and respected as one of the leaders of the entire community, and was the author of a two-volume Sefer known as "*Tachlas Mordecai*."

Rabbi Moishe Shohet 1912 - 1921

The scion of a rabbinical family, Moishe Shohet was born in 1877 in Shamantzer, Lithuania. As a young man he attended the famous Lithuanian yeshivas and obtained his ordination from the Yeshiva of Novogorod, a school of learning founded by a pupil of the Goan of Vilna. A younger brother followed him in the rabbinate while another studied medicine.

His father and grandfather were Jewish leaders in their community, distinguished by fine minds and deep

faith. This legacy was inherited by Moishe Shohet. While still in Europe he was a devoted adherent to the Mussar movement founded by Israel Salanter. Upon coming to America he served the community of Quincy, Mass., and in 1912, came to Beth Israel. In 1921, Rabbi Shohet left Bangor for Portland to take over the Shaarey Tphiloh Synagogue for his father, Hyman Shohet, who had passed away. Rabbi Shohet was a most able preacher and lost no opportunity to engage in the moral rebuke of his congregants.



Rabbi Shohet

He conducted seminars in the synagogue for the Chevra Mishnayoht. Rabbi Shohet never allowed the pressure of other communal duties to interfere with these lectures. During World War I and the critical period that followed, he gave his leadership to the entire Maine community in raising funds for war relief.

In 1923 he left America and made his home in B'nai Brak, a town famous for scholarly pursuit. He devoted his remaining years to writing commentaries and glosses to the works of the erudite scholars of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Rabbi Eliezer Levine 1925 - 1930

Rabbi Eliezer Levine, a son of Rabbi Shalom Levine, was born in 1882 in Luzk, Poland. He was a descendant of 36 generations of rabbis. He studied with Rabbi Mehel, Chief Rabbi of Luzk, and was ordained by Rabbi Kliger, Chief Rabbi of Brod, Poland.

Rabbi Levine served as a spiritual leader in Pinsk from 1903 to 1915. That year he became dean of the Yeshiva of Rovno, Poland, and held this post until 1925, when he moved to the United States.



Rabbi Levine

He served both Beth Israel and Beth Abraham and nearly succeeded in uniting these congregations.

In 1910 a major controversy regarding kashruth took place in Poland, and Rabbi Levine served on the Board of Rabbis to decide the issue. It was his decision that was finally accepted as the correct and authoritative interpretation of the law, and his opinion was recorded by Rabbi Malkiel of Lomzo, which can be found in his writings, "*Divre Malkiel*."

Rabbi Levine passed away on the 19th day of Tishri, 1950.

Rabbi Bernard L. Berzon 1937 - 1939

The history of Beth Israel illustrates that the synagogue has been, throughout the years, a training ground for rabbis who leave Bangor and become famous and respected in their fields both nationally, and at times, internationally. Rabbi Bernard L. Berzon fits that mold.

Rabbi Berzon was born in 1913 in Plissa, Poland, a small town near Vilna, Russia, the renowned center that Berzon described as being famous for rabbis and malaria.

He came to the United States when he was 9 years old, and had lived in Akron, Ohio, before his parents sent him to school in New York. Educated with a bachelor's degree in liberal arts from Yeshiva University in 1935, Rabbi Berzon was ordained from the yeshiva in the same year. During his tenure at Beth Israel, Rabbi Berzon also earned a master's degree in labor economics from the University of Maine. His thesis on the non-economic elements involving a local workers' strike became well-known and was a timely and interesting work that related to the fever of sit-down strikes that were happening throughout the country. In 1942, Rabbi Berzon earned a doctoral degree in social psychology while he was in New York, and in 1976 was also awarded an honorary doctorate of divinity from his alma mater in New York.

Before coming to Beth Israel in 1937, Rabbi Berzon had spent part of the previous year teaching Jewish subjects at a synagogue in Scranton, Penn. While in Bangor, Rabbi Berzon was the sole rabbi of the three orthodox shuls in the city, and also enjoyed good relations with the non-Jewish clergy.

Although his time at Beth Israel was short, Rabbi Berzon became well-known after his departure from Bangor. He credited his tenure here with providing him the formal training that was needed to apply what he had learned in school to actual practice.

After spending 44 years at Congregation Ahavath Israel in Brooklyn, N.Y., Rabbi Berzon retired from

the pulpit in 1982 to move to Israel where three of his children were living. Before leaving the pulpit, however, Rabbi Berzon also had served as editor of the Rabbinical Council of America Manual of Sermons in 1943, as president of the Rabbinical Alumni of Yeshiva University from 1966 to 1968, as president of the Rabbinical Council of America from 1970 to 1972, and as vice president of the Religious Zionists of America from 1971 to 1973. Also, Rabbi Berzon was awarded a life contract at Congregation Ahavath Israel.



Rabbi Berzon

After his retirement, he soon found that he missed his work. He decided to apply his maxim that "as long as a person can be active he should not retire" to his own life and accepted a part-time position as rabbi at the Crown Hotel in Miami, Fla., where he also has a residence. Although he still lists Jerusalem as his permanent home, Rabbi Berzon also spends part of the year in New York City.

Rabbi Berzon said that he still had fond memories of his service in Bangor, and at times still has contact with some members of the old community. His activities frequently are covered by local newspapers, and at times Mainers, now living in Florida, will inquire as to whether Berzon was the same rabbi who served in the 1930s.

During his long career, Rabbi Berzon also wrote five books as well as many articles dealing with labor problems. His books include: "*Sects in Israel*," which he started while in Maine, "*Good Beginnings*," a book he described as concerning people who had great ideas but ended up in the "spiritual doghouse," and another titled "*Sermons the Year Round*."

Rabbi Berzon and his wife, Sylvia, have four children, 15 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Their children are Judith Greenwald, 51, who lives in Brooklyn with her husband, Rabbi Eli B. Greenwald; Chananya Berzon, 47, a rabbi and teacher of rabbinics at Bar Ilan University near Jerusalem; Adina Gertz, 39, who is married to a doctor and teacher of neuro-anatomy at the Hadassah Medical School in Jerusalem; and Azarya Berzon, 34, a Talmudic professor at Shalarim University near Jerusalem.

Rabbi Moishe Zucker **1945 - 1947**

Rabbi Moishe Zucker was more a scholar and teacher than an advocate. He preferred not to engage in controversy, but rather, to show both sides of every debatable issue and let the individual choose his own course of action. He impressed upon the lay leadership of the congregation to respect his scholarship and to free him from the burden of many administrative duties. He believed that synagogues had the same obligation to Jewish culture that universities had to the general culture. Even those



Rabbi Zucker

who were not too ardent about Jewish culture recognized what Rabbi Zucker meant to the community. His Bible classes, his discourses on the Talmud, and his sermons were equally attractive to eye and ear.

His fine record as a scholar won for him an appointment in 1947 as Rabbinics professor on the faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City, where he also served as chairman of the undergraduate Talmud department, a position awarded to him in 1958, as well as chairman of the Talmudic department in the Teacher's Institute and Seminary College. Dr. Zucker remained at the Seminary for 33 years, retiring in 1980.

During his tenure at the seminary, he published his magnum opus, a two-volume work on Saadia Gaon, a writer who lived from 982 to 1042. He also published a smaller volume on Hefetz Ben Yatzliah, as well as numerous articles in scholarly journals in the United States and Israel, all concerning literary works of the Gaonic period.

In 1952 a generous grant from the late James Gimpel Striar enabled Dr. Zucker to make his first research trip to England and Israel. In 1956 he received a grant from the Philosophical Society of America which enabled him to study in the great libraries of England, Holland and Paris. In 1962 he was appointed a fellow of the Guggenheim Foundation and revisited the European libraries.

During his European research trips, Dr. Zucker examined documents from the Cairo Geniza papers, a cache of ancient manuscripts with material from the ninth to the 13th century, including a fragment of the

Hebrew text of Ecclesiasticus, that was discovered in 1896 in an old Cairo synagogue by Solomon Schechter, the second president of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Dr. Zucker was born on Jan. 14, 1902, in Kopeczowka, Poland. He studied philosophy at the University of Vienna from 1925 to 1930, and also attended the Jewish Theological Seminary of Vienna, where he was ordained in 1931. He came to the United States in 1937, and served as rabbi of the Avenue N Jewish Community Center in Brooklyn from 1938 to 1945. During this period he also studied at Dropsie University in Philadelphia, which awarded him a doctoral degree.

The great scope of Dr. Zucker's mind and ability can be illustrated by these two anecdotes:

When he was preparing to travel to the United States, Dr. Zucker was advised to play down his thorough knowledge of the Talmud, and tell the American scholars, whose knowledge was more finite than European rabbis, that he knew only half of what he really did know. In one interview, he was asked whether he knew the Talmud. He did, he replied. "How much?" he was asked. "Half," Dr. Zucker said. When asked "Which half?" Dr. Zucker asked, "Which half do you want?"

The other anecdote describes Dr. Zucker as a teacher at the Jewish Theological Seminary, where his almost total recall memory of the Torah and Bible began to bother one student who pleaded that Dr. Zucker at least refer to the books during lectures. The next day, the book was indeed in place before him as he taught, but when the student came to him after class to thank him for his consideration, he noticed that the book was upside down.

Rabbi Zucker was married to the former Mania Kuperwaser, who predeceased him. They had no children. Rabbi Zucker passed away at a Miami nursing home Aug. 7, 1987. He was 85 years old.

Rabbi Avraham Freedman **1949 - 1969**

No review of Beth Israel's 100 years of history would be complete without considering the significance of Rabbi Avraham Freedman's 20 years in the pulpit and the notable contribution he made to the spiritual and physical development of the congregation.

Rabbi Freedman was the spiritual leader of the Beth Israel congregation during the synagogue's period of rapid growth.

Born in Russia on July 26, 1906, he served in Ottawa, Ontario, after his ordination from Yeshiva University in New York City. In 1937, he received a call

to serve in Durban, South Africa, where he also served part time as chaplain to the South African army during World War II. Rabbi Freedman served in Durban until 1949, when he left South Africa for Bangor.

During the next 20 years the size of Beth Israel's congregation grew considerably, and Rabbi Freedman set himself the task of conveying to his congregants that the synagogue should be a living fountain of inspiration and that it could give rich personal satisfaction while gently persuading its devotees to put their religion to work in all avenues of daily life.

Although the multitude of activities engaged in by the rabbi took a great deal of time, they did not infringe upon the services he gave to his congregation; in every sense of the word, he was its spiritual leader and also its administrative mainspring. He held a deep conviction that once a rabbi is elected to serve, he must become the guide, and the members of his congregation, his followers. Though he often came into minor disagreement with shul leaders because of his espousal of tradition, when the question was one of principle, he refused to compromise.

His conception of his office was that of "The Rabbi in Action" and he always was ready to enlist in any humanitarian effort. Under Rabbi Freedman's leadership, the synagogue grew in influence. In and out of the pulpit, on radio and television, Rabbi Freedman demonstrated the qualities of heart and mind that brought him recognition as the distinguished spokesman for Jewry in this region. Of him it may be said that he was a fearless and articulate crusader for human rights. To the cause of unity and brotherhood he gave leadership and utmost loyalty by his involvement in interfaith activities and service clubs.

Rabbi Freedman conceived it his duty to march beyond the walls of one building and to minister to the community, moved by the love of God and man.

Rabbi Freedman was especially effective as an interpreter of Judaism to Christian ministers and teachers. His profound, philosophic knowledge, his deep rabbinic scholarship, and his eloquent oratory made him a favored spokesman.

Through the media, Rabbi Freedman contributed uniquely and with distinction to the development of a



Rabbi Freedman

liberal, progressive approach to social, communal and cultural issues. His presentation of the "Jewish Points of View" to the faculty and students of the University of Maine and the Bangor Theological Seminary, was highly commended for its clarity, courage, dignity and self-restraint.

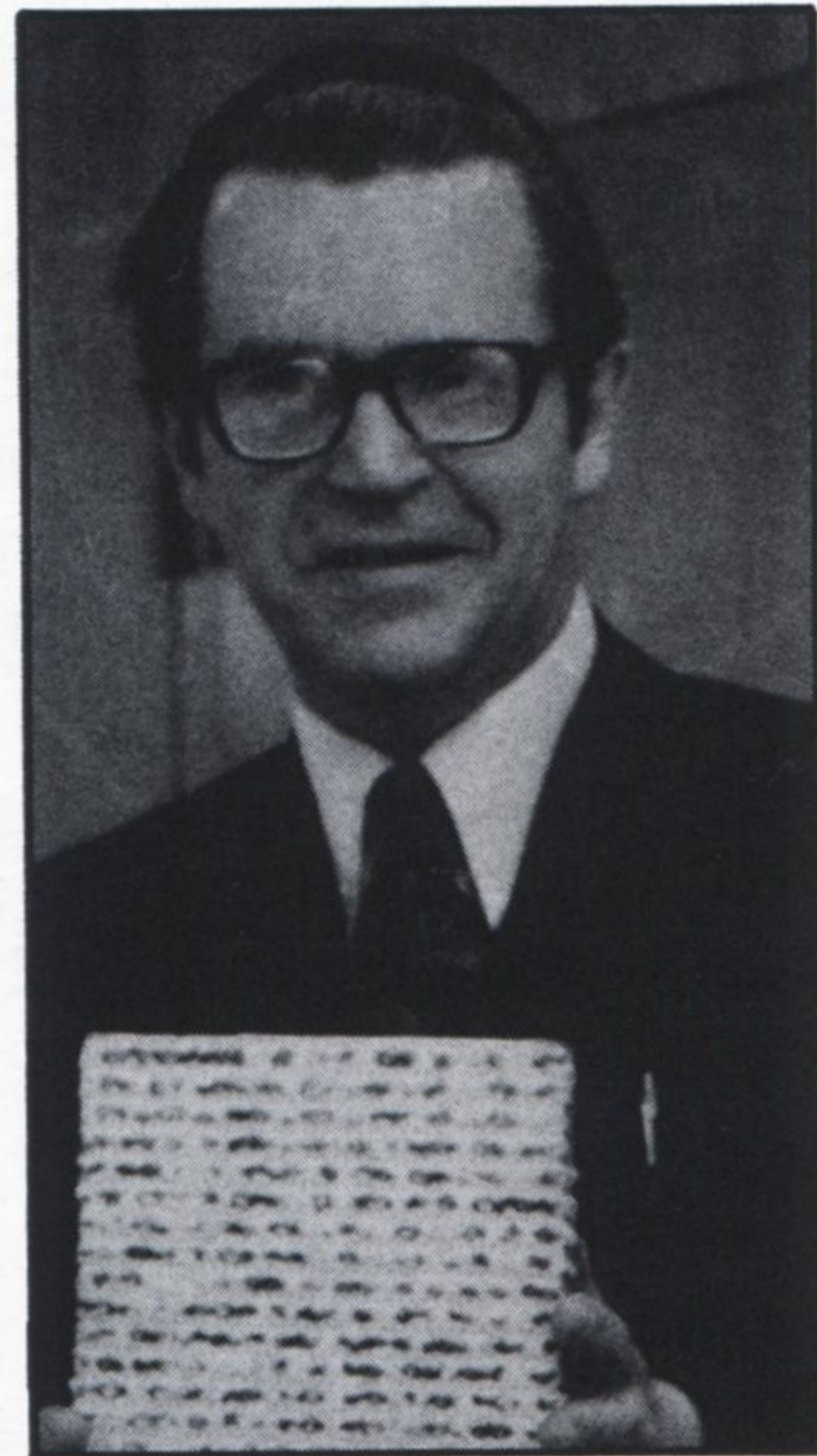
In local, civic, cultural and communal matters, Rabbi Freedman was active in support of the Community Chest, the United Jewish Appeal, and many other significant endeavors. He was also the supervisor of the Bangor Hebrew School.

On his 10th anniversary, Rabbi Freedman was lauded in the press by his and other congregations for his contributions to his synagogue and community. His record of achievement was duly noted when the board of directors voted the rabbi a life tenure at its July 1963 meeting.

Rabbi Freedman and his wife, Hannah, also a very active member of the community, have two children — a son, David, and a daughter, Kadimah. In 1969, Rabbi Freedman retired from the pulpit, and spent the next two years studying in Israel. He now lives in Brookline, Mass.

Rabbi Irving A. Margolies 1971 - 1976

Rabbi Irving Margolies arrived at Beth Israel in 1971. The son of a rabbi, Margolies was born in Jerusalem in 1924 and studied in New York, where he earned a bachelor of arts degree in 1946, and was ordained in 1948. In 1956, he earned a doctorate degree in Hebrew literature at the Bernard Revel Graduate School. Before coming to Bangor, he held pulpits in northern Ontario and in Hackensack and Emerson, N.J. From 1950 to 1958 he was the spiritual leader of Young Israel of Parkchester, N.Y.



Rabbi Margolies

During his five years in Bangor, Rabbi Margolies was active in shul and community affairs. Interested in the educational aspects of adults, he organized the Adult Education Institute, which provided classes in Judaism, and he also served as principal of the Hebrew School.

Rabbi Margolies also continued the breakfast and

lecture series after Sunday services at the synagogue, which brought such distinguished Maine guests as former U.S. Sen. Edmund Muskie and then U.S. Rep. William Cohen to the podium to speak on issues of the day. Rabbi Margolies was often the spokesman for the community, and his activities ranged from lecturing on Jewish law to reviewing literature during Jewish Book Month.

After leaving Beth Israel in 1976, Rabbi Margolies served at pulpits in New York, Tennessee and Pennsylvania.

Rabbi Margolies died May 20, 1989, in Cherry Hill, N.J. He is survived by two sons, a daughter and his wife, Shoshana.

Rabbi Alan M. Kalinsky **1976 - 1981**

Upon being named rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel at age 25, Rabbi Kalinsky appeared the opposite of the staid, somber spiritual leader that was often associated with rabbis.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1951, Rabbi Kalinsky was educated and ordained in his home state, and in 1988 was a doctoral candidate in Educational Administration from the David J. Azrieli School of Graduate Education in New York City.

Rabbinical duties, according to Rabbi Kalinsky, were more than providing spiritual leadership. He said those duties extended to friendship and a thorough knowledge of diplomatic and scholarly aspects of Jewish life. As a bridge between the past and present, Rabbi Kalinsky supported the expanded role of women in Judaism and believed that a women's role in family, religion and community were indispensable and equal to the man's.

Rabbi Kalinsky did not view empty seats in the shul as a problem. Rather, he believed that the community was able to band together during the High Holy Days to affirm its heritage and inspiration.

Rabbi Kalinsky's services to the Maine Jewish Community stretched beyond the bounds of Bangor, as he also served as chaplain in the U.S. Air Force Reserves. In October of 1978 Rabbi Kalinsky, now a



Rabbi Kalinsky

major in the Reserves, sued the Air Force and the U.S. Secretary of Defense over an Air Force requirement that he shave his beard while performing his duties. Citing a conflict with religion, Rabbi Kalinsky was confident of winning the case, which he did, because both the Navy and Army allowed men to grow beards.

After leaving Bangor in 1981, Rabbi Kalinsky traveled to Schenectady, N.Y., where he served for two years as rabbi of the Orthodox Beth Israel Synagogue. In 1986, he was elected to serve as West Coast director of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, a Los Angeles-based organization that encompasses congregations from Edmonton, Alberta, to Santa Fe, N.M., and is involved with political action and youth activities. Rabbi Kalinsky also serves as secretary of the Rabbinical Council of California and as a chaplain at Los Angeles Air Force Base.

Rabbi Kalinsky lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Sandy, and their three children: Michael, 3, Elissa, 10, and Joseph, 11.

Rabbi Joseph P. Schonberger 1982 - present

Once again, the dynamic service of youth came to Beth Israel in 1982 in the form of Rabbi Joseph Schonberger.

Rabbi Schonberger was born in Rehovot, Israel, in 1953, but was raised in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, where he maintains his citizenship.

Educated with a master's degree in Judaica and his ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary, a bachelor's degree in psychology from Columbia University, and associate's degrees in psychology and sociology from Miami-Dade Community College, Rabbi Schonberger brought with him to Bangor a wide range of knowledge and interests.

Rabbi Schonberger has worked to stress the involvement of people of all ages, and to re-establish the synagogue in its historic role as a community hub. One of his goals as the synagogue's first Conservative rabbi is to spread his belief that the congregation should be viewed as an extended family. He believes that Judaism and its traditions are indispensable guides for every aspect of religious and secular life, essential for Jewish life to be whole. The shul is empowered as an ethical and spiritual force when individual Jews are sensitive to Jewish imperatives to nurture each other and their community. He stresses a positive approach to life and an allowance for progress as traditional Jewish values.

Rabbi Schonberger sees his role as leader of Congregation Beth Israel as a means of demonstrating Jewish values to the larger community. He interacts with other clergy and their congregations by meeting with Sunday school classes, Bible study groups, and assisting in the organization of ecumenical services. Rabbi Schonberger also participates on several hospital and volunteer boards, bringing a Jewish perspective to areas of ethical review, hospice care and communal needs.

Rabbi Schonberger says that as Jews plan for the future they should remember the past. Only by confronting injustice and prejudice can humanity prevent another Holocaust, which his parents survived. It is historically the responsibility of all Jews to apply their abilities and learning to the development and improvement of humankind, a task Rabbi Schonberger believes Jews upheld quite well as leading innovators of almost



Rabbi Schonberger

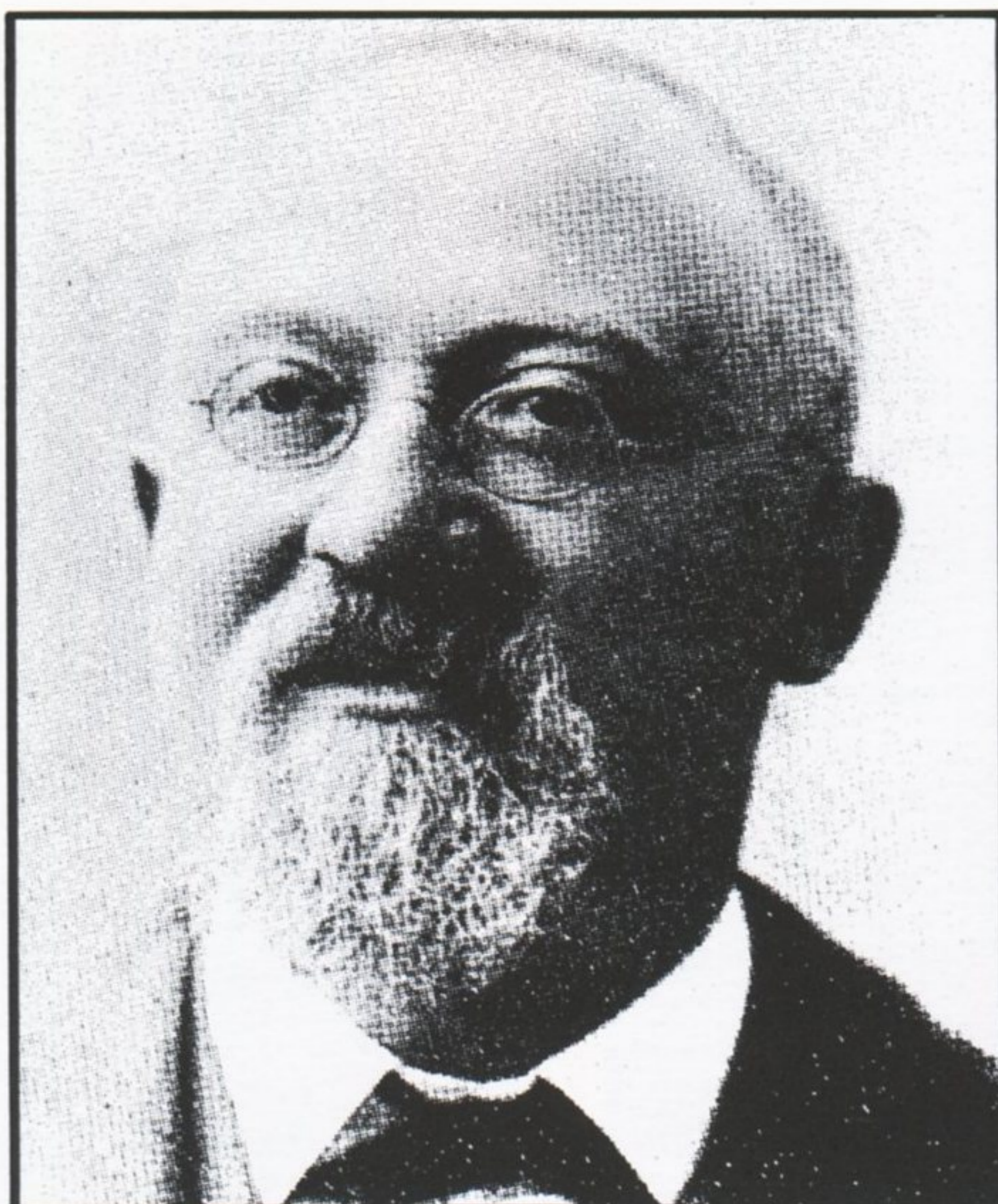
every constructive field, from medicine to law and government.

As a Conservative rabbi serving his first full-time pulpit, Rabbi Schonberger does not reject modern advances nor traditional standards, but seeks benefits from both. It is through the Conservative outlook that Rabbi Schonberger believes he can lead his congregation through rapidly changing times and still maintain Jewish beliefs and traditions. The key to Schonberger's philosophy is the dynamic balance between tradition and modernity, which he believes guides Judaism flexibly and sensibly in every generation.

It is the intent of Rabbi Schonberger to increase the participation of the youth in shul affairs, and to stress "historically mainstream and mutually respectful Judaism."

During a trip to Honduras in July 1988, Rabbi Schonberger and his wife, Susan, extended the Beth Israel family even more, and adopted a baby, David Zev Schonberger.

The Presidents Of Beth Israel



Marks Goldman
First Gabbai
1888 - 1897



Max Cohen
1897 - 1899
1909 - 1910



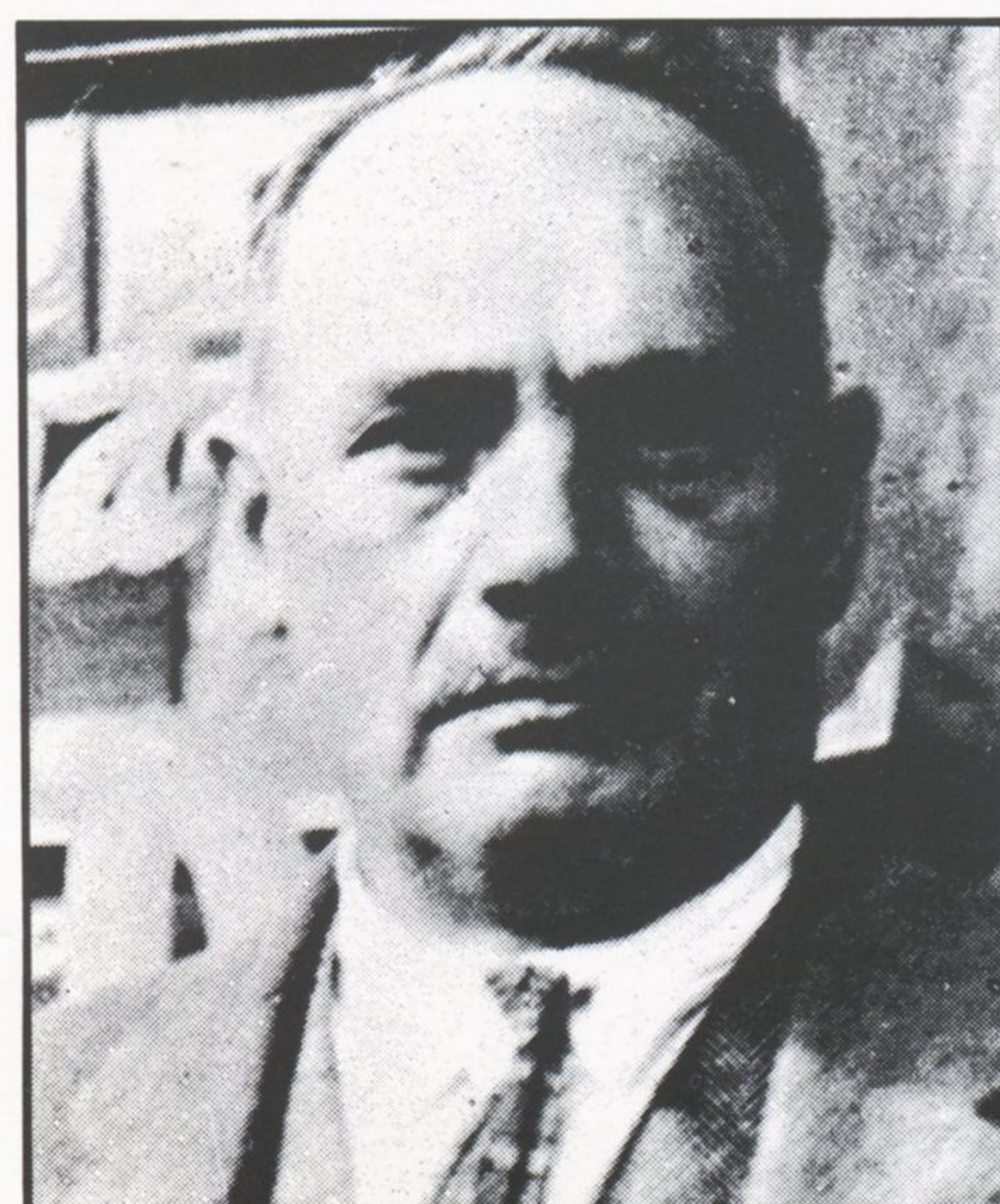
Harry Cohen
1899 - 1905



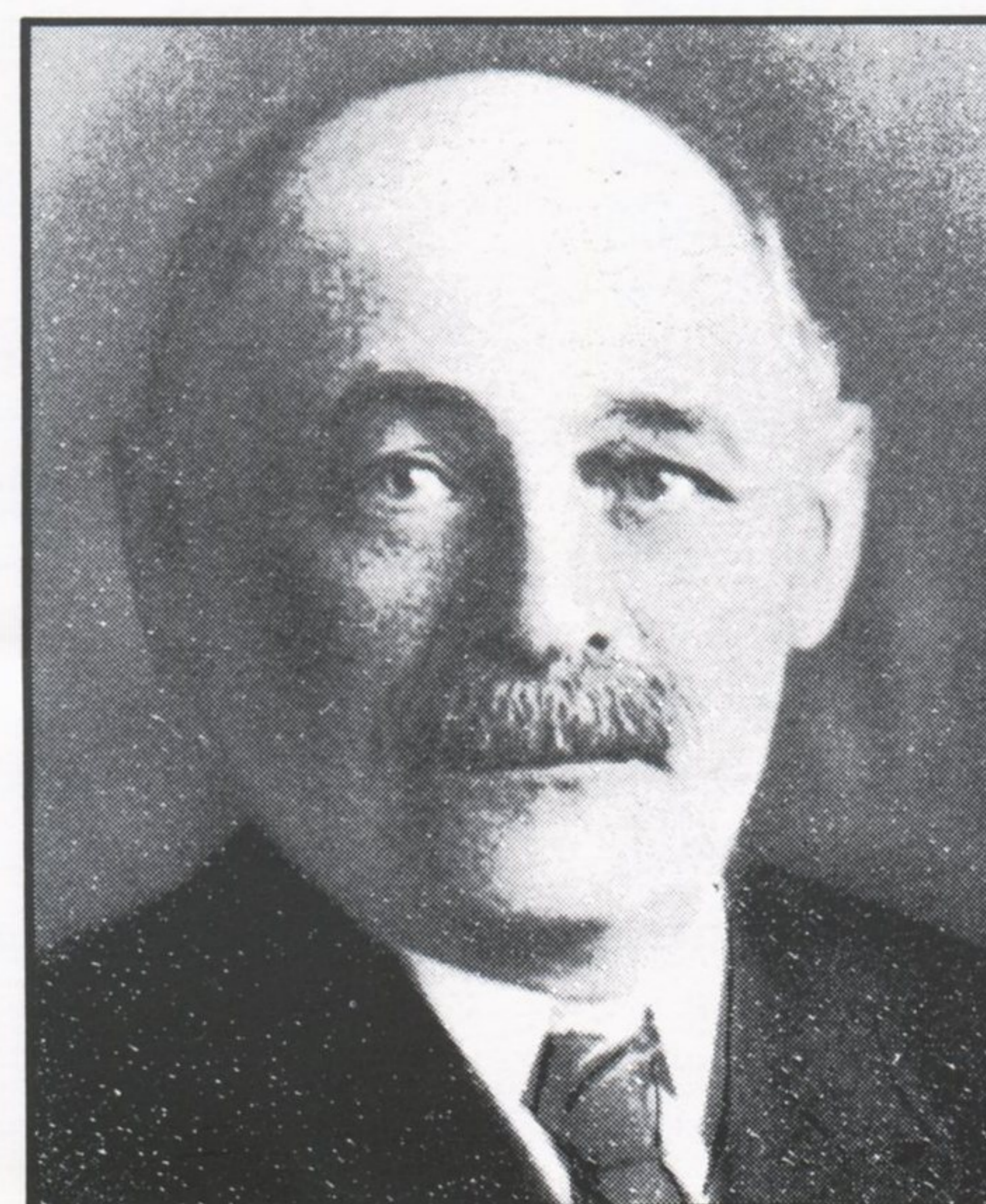
Louis Berger
1905 - 1906



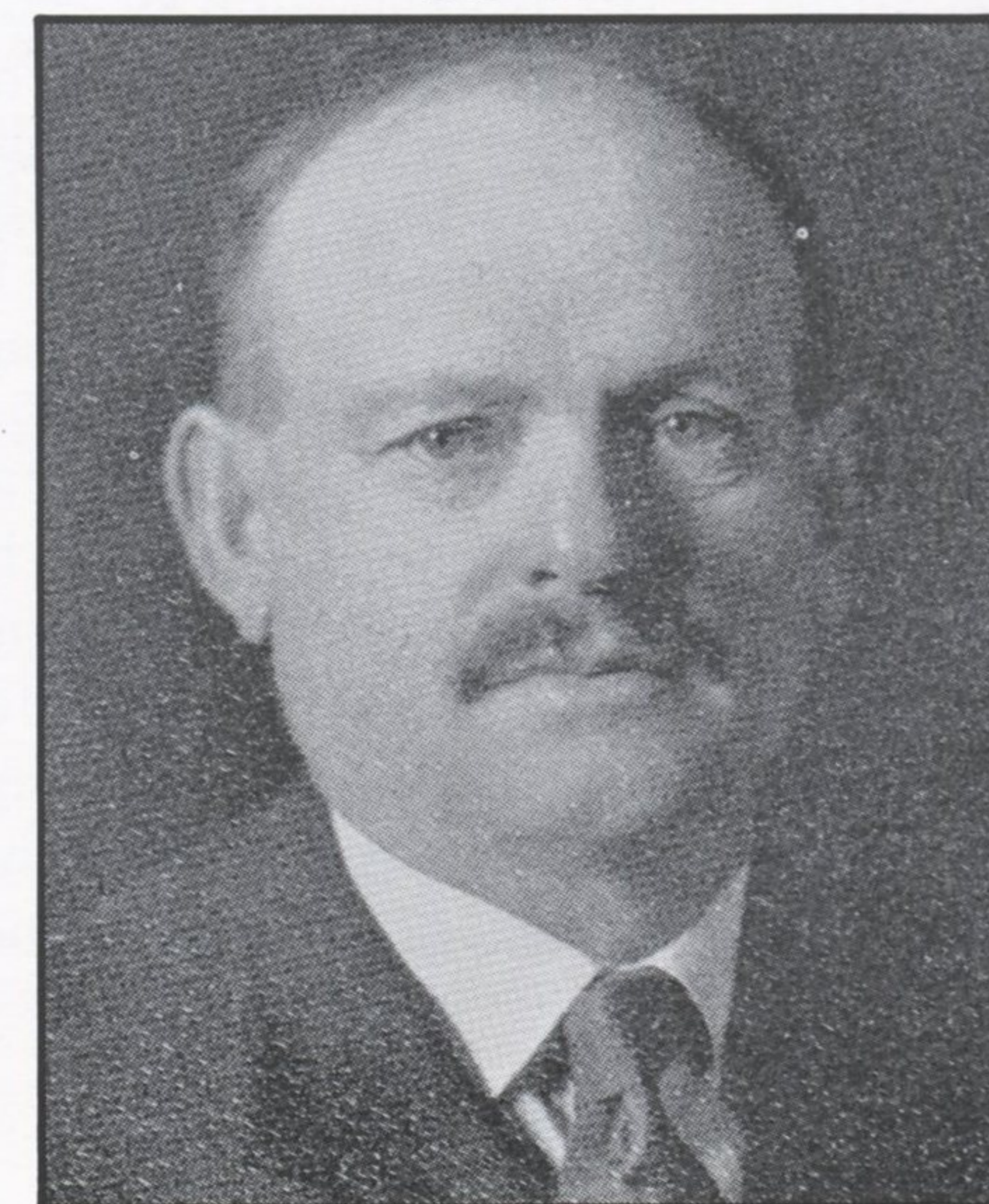
Morris L. Rosen
1906 - 1907
1913 - 1915
1933 - 1938



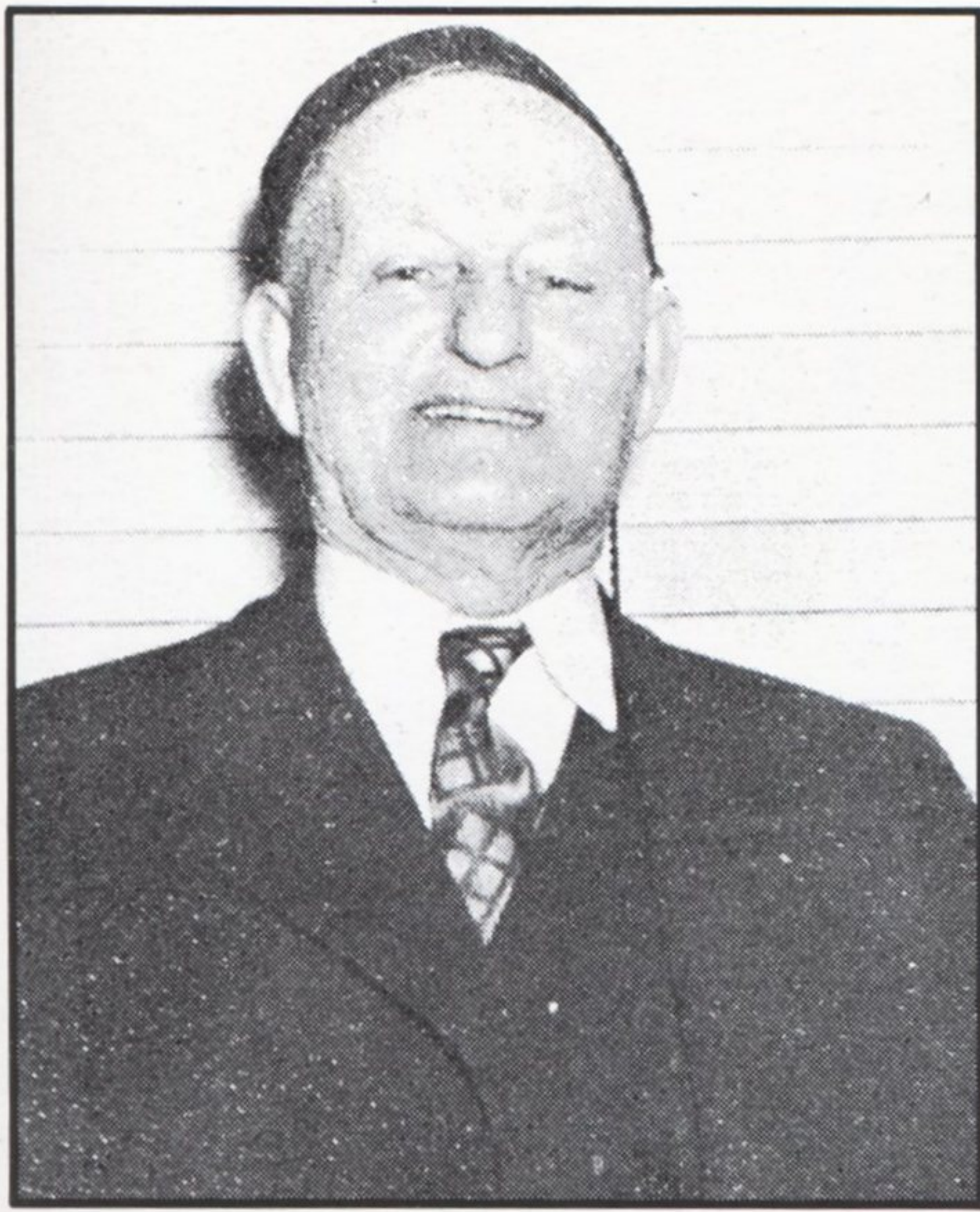
Elias H. Rosen
1907 - 1909



Joseph Byer
1910 - 1912



Abraham J. Berson
1912 - 1913



Wolf Lipsky
1915 - 1917



Simon Kominsky
1917 - 1921
1926 - 1927



Adolph B. Friedman
1921 - 1924
1927 - 1930



Abram Brown
1924 - 1926



Louis Rapaport
1930 - 1933



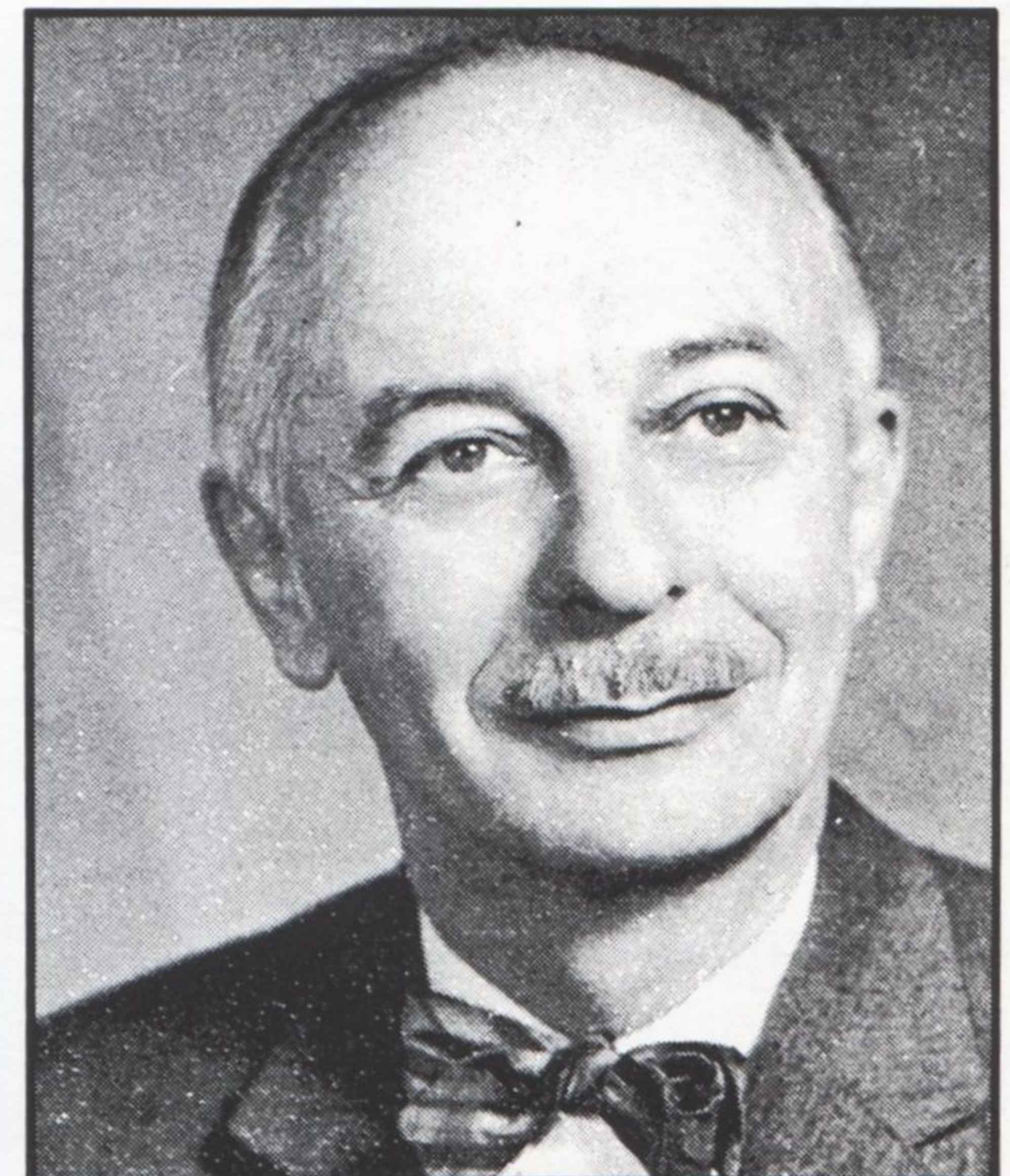
Goodman Gaffen
1938 - 1939



Edward Stern
1939 - 1941



Harold Epstein
1941 - 1947
1948 - 1965



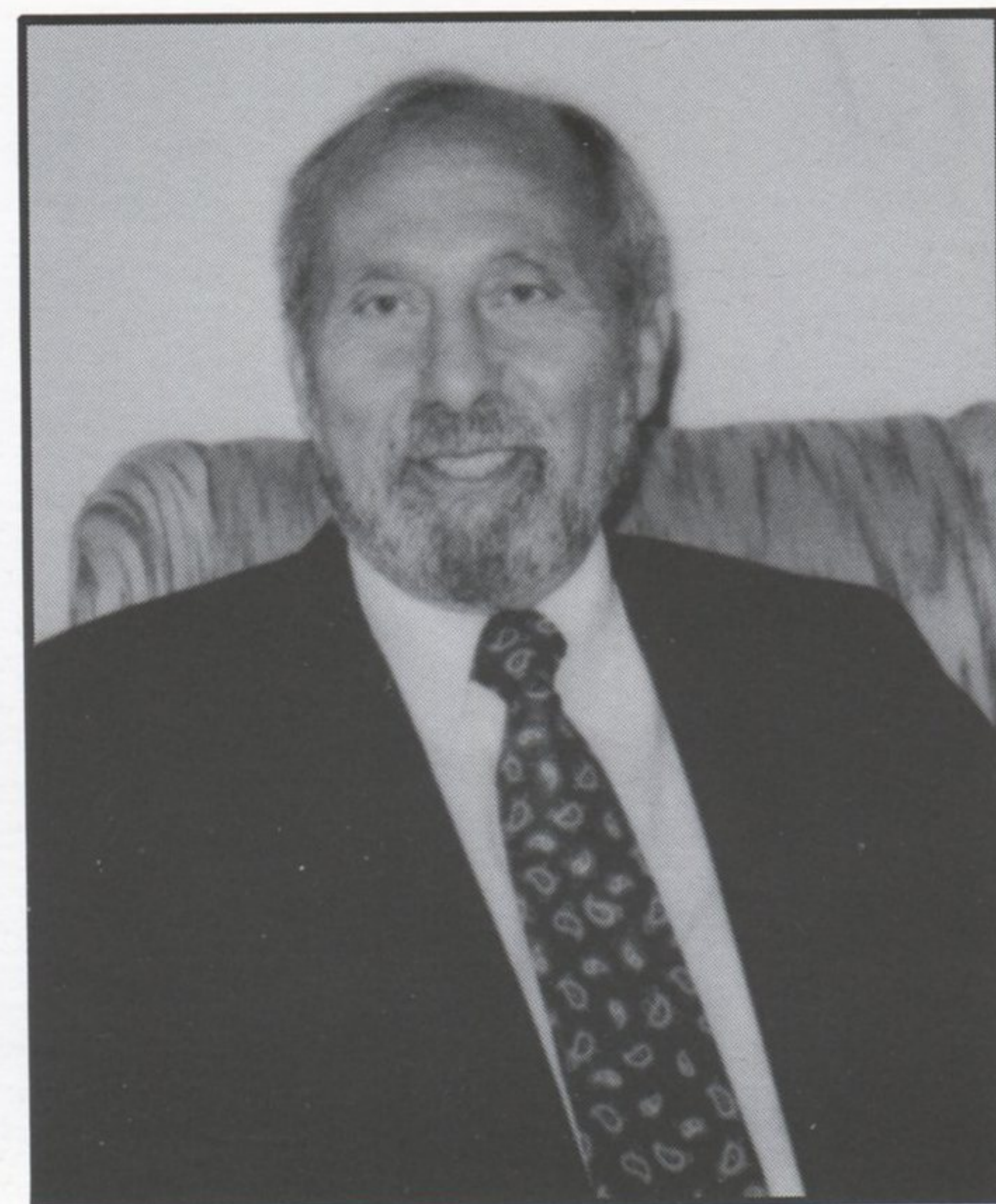
Samuel Goodman
1947 - 1948



Joseph Ornstein
1965 - 1969



Samuel Rolsky
1969 - 1972



Seymour Chamoff
1972 - 1976



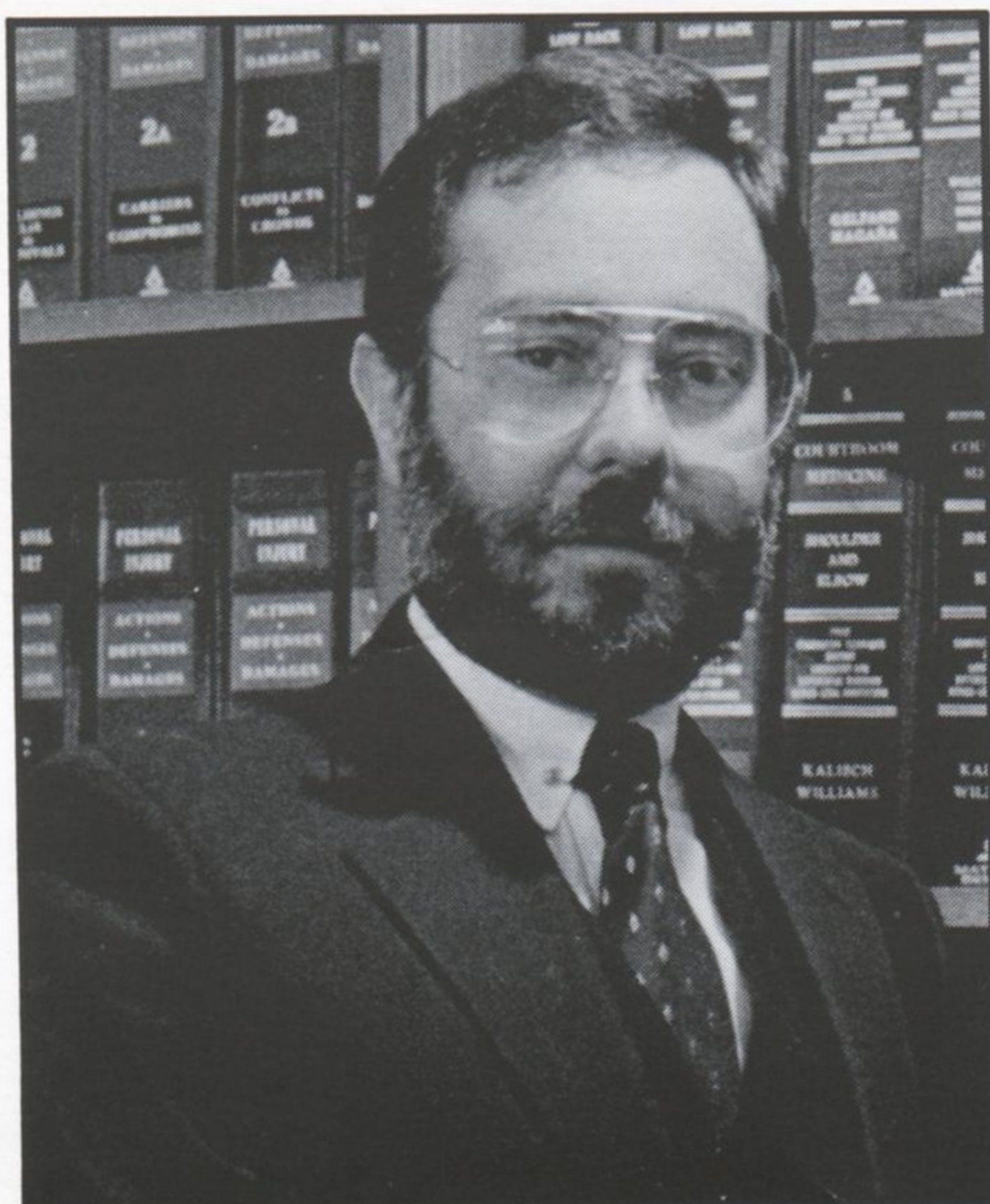
Neil Glazier
1976 - 1977



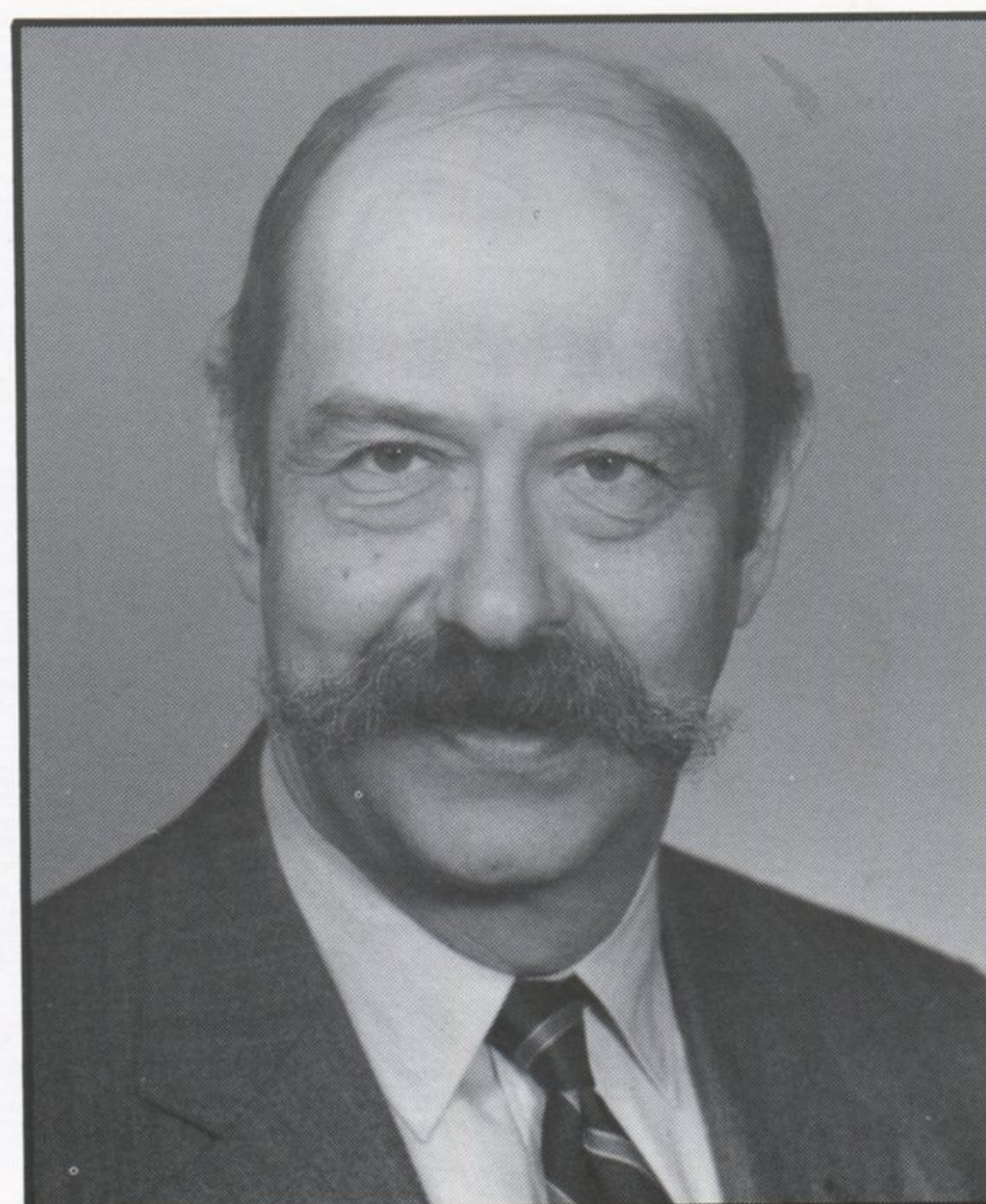
William Miller
1977 - 1979



Harold Baron
1979 - 1982

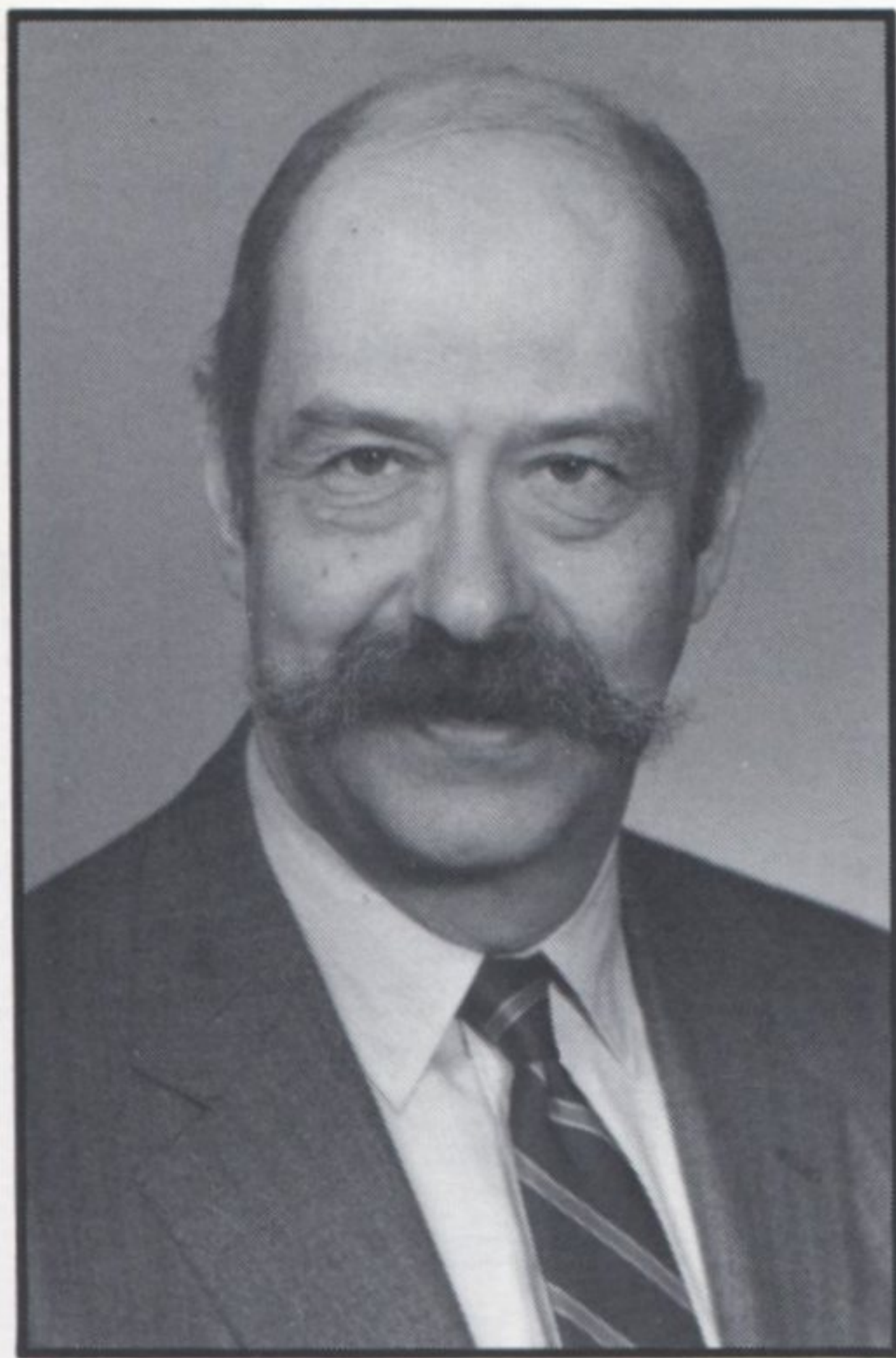


Marshall Stern
1982 - 1983

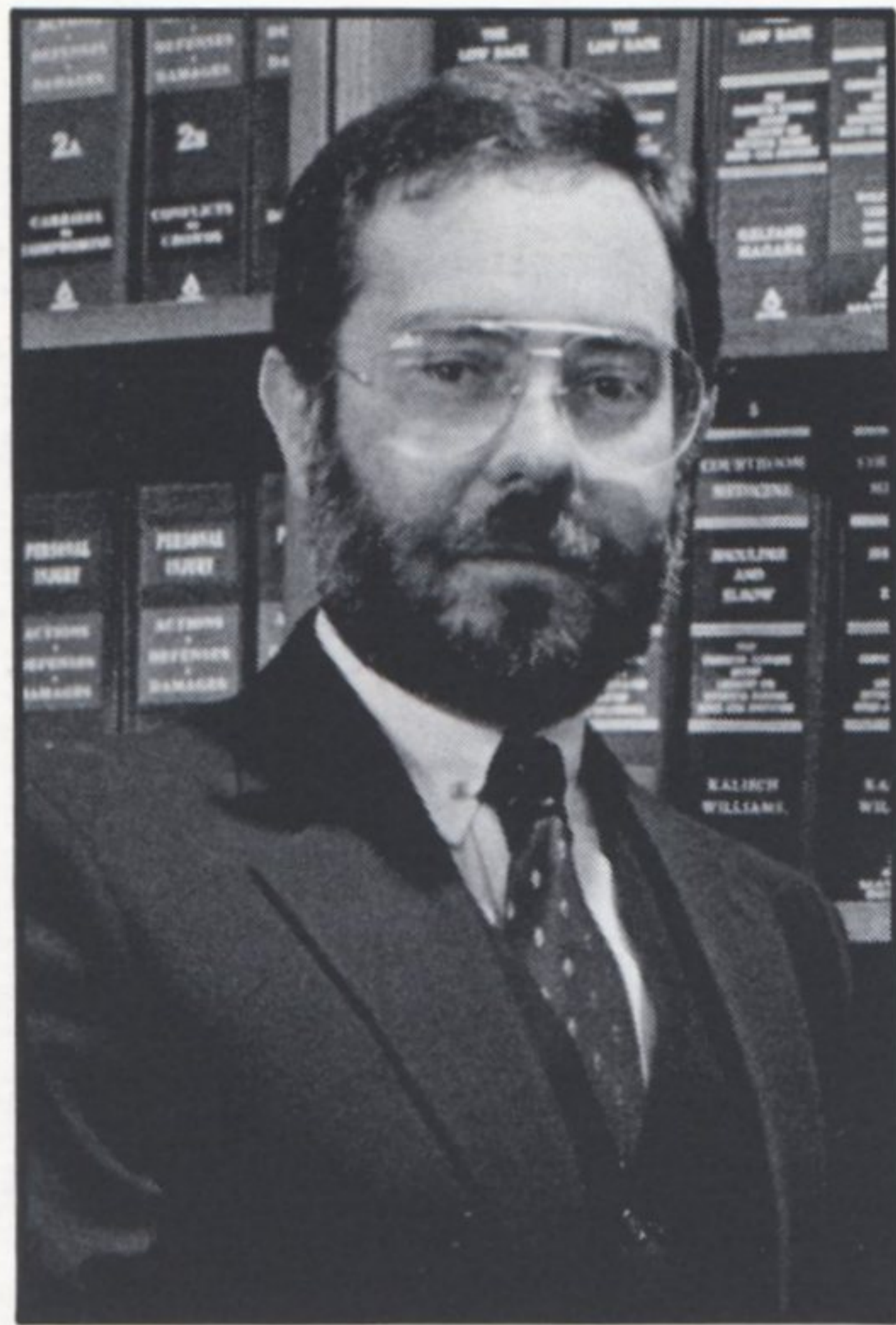


Norman Minsky
1983 - present

1988 Officers Of Congregation Beth Israel



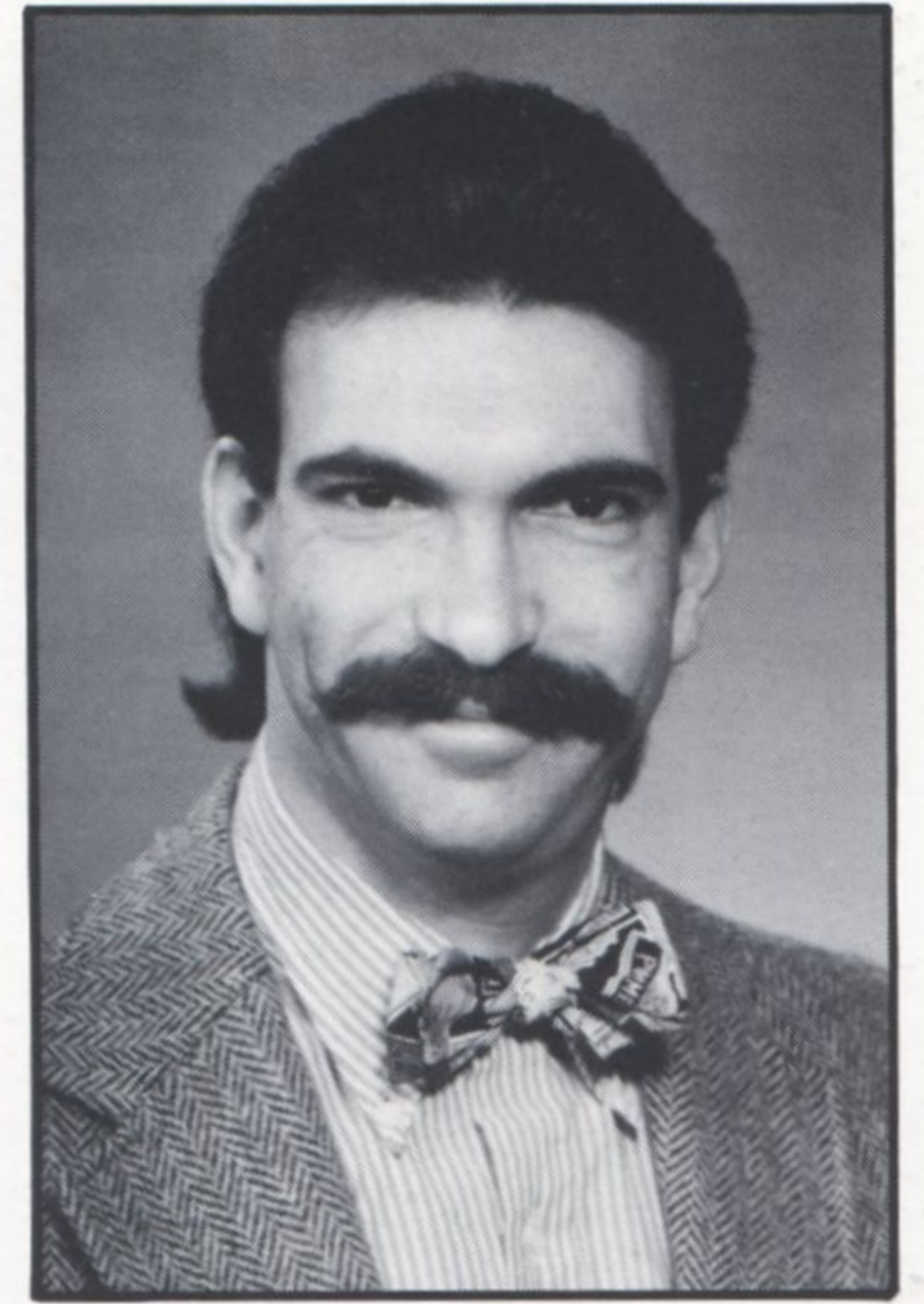
Norman Minsky
President



Marshall Stern
Vice President



Miles Theeman
Treasurer



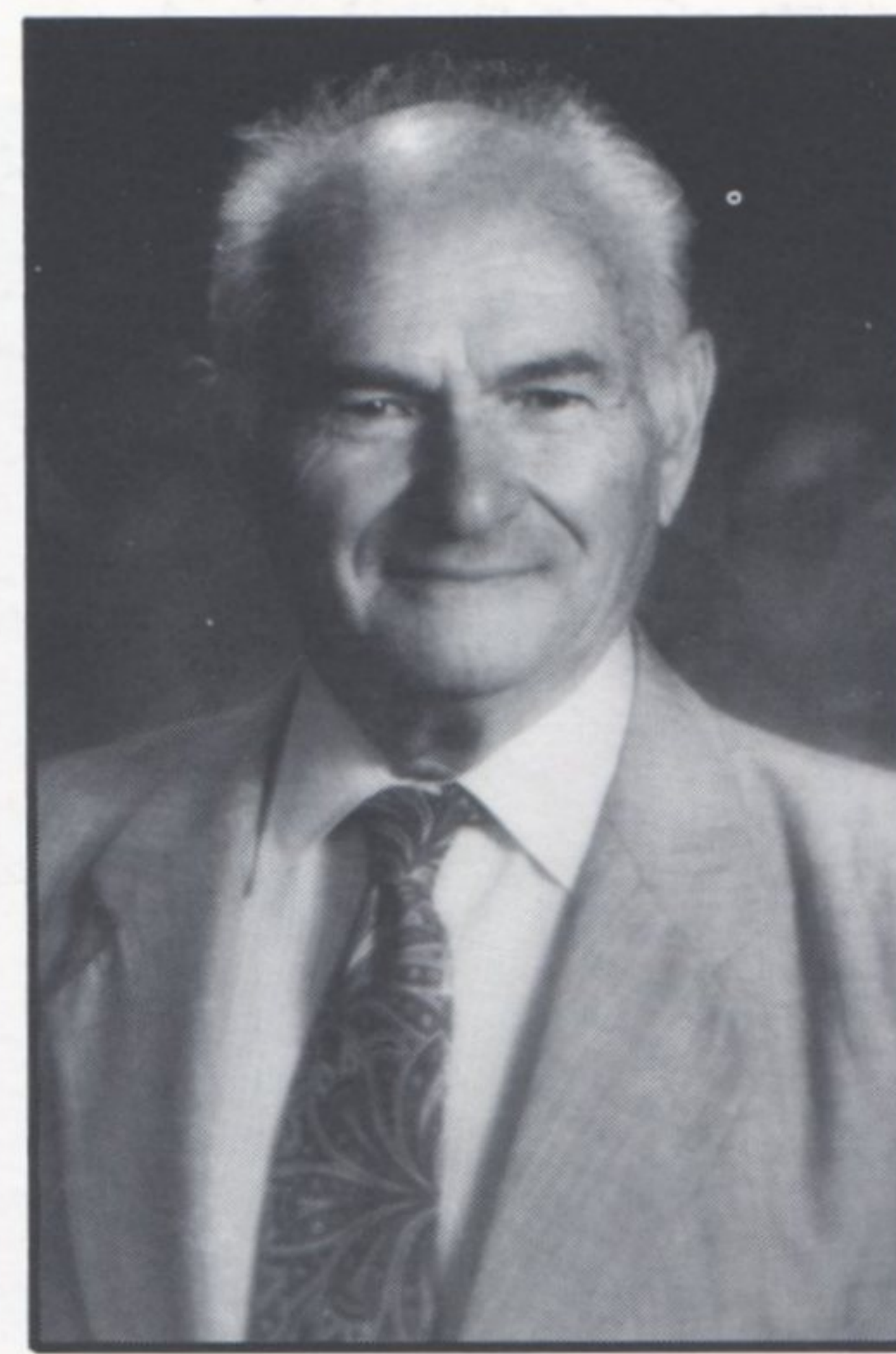
David Simonds
Secretary



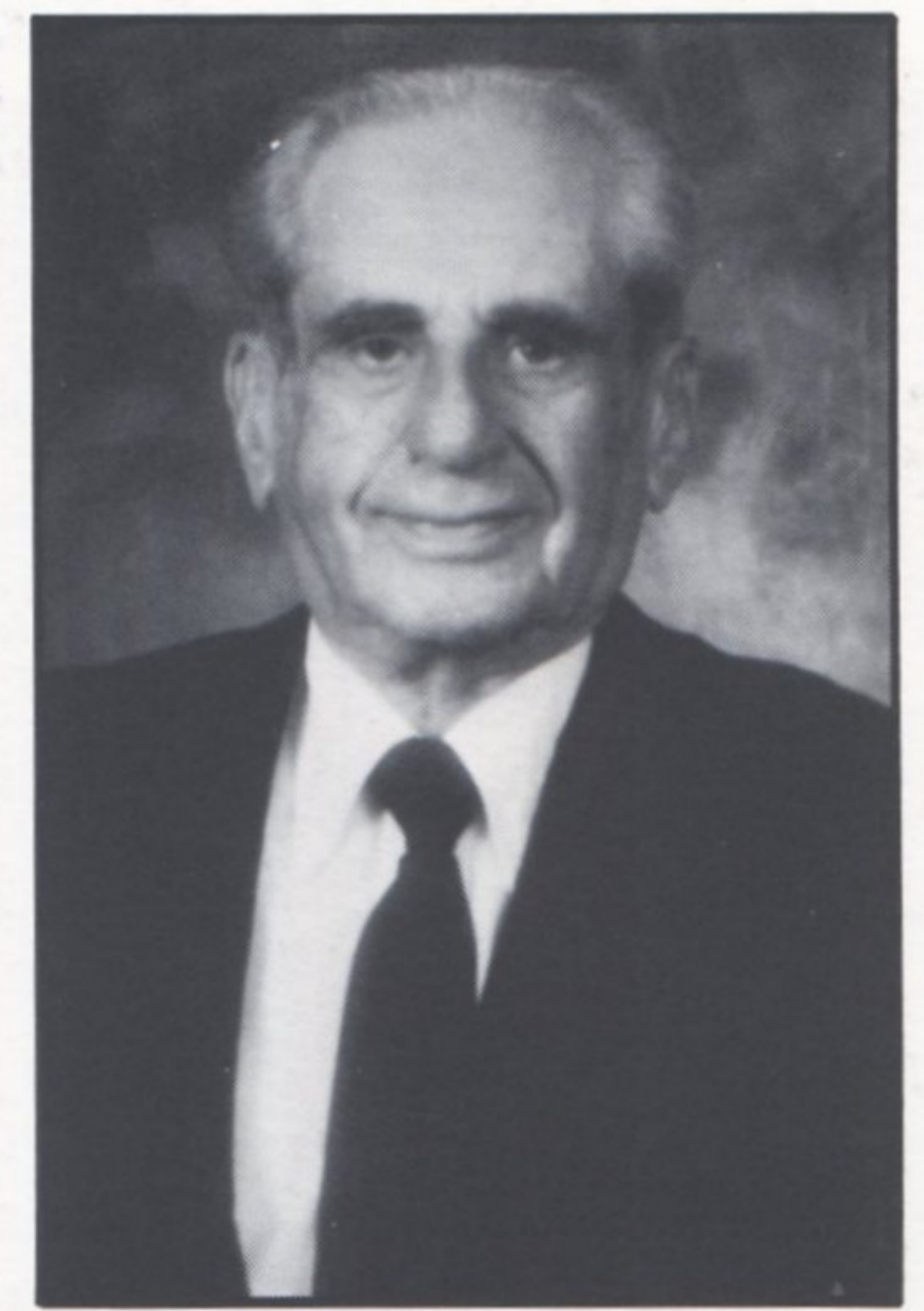
David Adelman
Treasurer of Cemetery



Samuel Rolsky
First Gabbai



Abraham Shapiro
Second Gabbai



Robert Fogelman
Third Gabbai

Board Of Directors

David Adelman
Harold Baron
Lawrence Berson
Irving Broder
Kenneth Brownstein
Sewall Chason
Sidney Chason
Allan Cohen
Lester Cohen
William Cohen
Fran D'Errico
Lawrence Dennis
Ron Dennis

Irving Emple
Robert Fogelman
Arnold Garson
Alan Glazier
Marvin Glazier
Neil Glazier
Stanley Israel
Nathan Kamen
David Lieberman
Bernard Miller
Sanford Miller
Norman Minsky

Allan Ollove
Samuel Rolsky
Peter Schwartz
Henry Segal
Abraham Shapiro
David Simonds
Marshall Stern
Patti Tableman
Miles Theeman
Deena Weinstein
Alan White-Rogers
Richard Zwerling

Bangor's Early Role In Zionism

The Zionist movement has been a primary force throughout the years for many Jews. There is no doubt that political Zionism, as envisaged by Dr. Theodor Herzl, had a tremendous effect on Jewish life.

Although there was other Zionist activity in Bangor in the early 1900s, the membership of Beth Israel took the first step to officially organize a group when it formed the "Chovevei Zion" in 1903. Rabbi Seltzer, Joe Raichlin, Morris Rosen, Sam Leavitt, Jonah Wallace, Philip Hillson and Joe Byer were the nucleus of the forerunner of the present Bangor Zionist District.

By 1905 there was a B'nai Zion, and during that year a mass meeting was held at Congregation Beth Israel to support the proposed purchase of Palestine from the Turkish government. The optimistic leaders were reported as believing that "on account of the present financial conditions, the purchase will be easily effected."

In 1912, Myer Minsky, a name that was later to become synonymous with the Bangor Zionist movement, was instrumental in initiating a "Young Judea" club.

During World War I, leaders like the Rev. Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, Zionist orator, spoke in Bangor. Jewish National Fund activities were carried on continually.

In November 1919, Bangor's Jews gathered at the synagogue to hear two speakers from Boston. Dr. M.M. Eichlez and M. Alpert discussed the Zionist movement and the Balfour Declaration.

Under the leadership of Minsky, the Bangor Zionist District, then known as the Sons and Daughters of Zion, played an important role in the life of the young Bangor Jewish community.

Before there was a Jewish Community Center, the Sons and Daughters of Zion was the main social organization for Jews in Bangor. The group rented rooms for activities and also sponsored social functions including dances and sailing trips on the Penobscot River.

Perhaps the most memorable activity of the district was its surprise reception of a train carrying a contingent of the Jewish Legion through Bangor on its way to Halifax and Europe in 1918.

A week before the train's scheduled arrival, Minsky

announced the trip to the Bangor group. What was supposed to be a non-eventful pass through a sleepy Maine town in the pre-dawn hours — between 2 and 4 a.m. — turned into a festive celebration.

Legion members were met by almost 100 cheering people including practically the entire Bangor Jewish community. A band was playing and people were dancing and singing. The Legionnaires enjoyed the sandwiches, pastries, fruit and other refreshments the Jewish residents had prepared for them.

Among the revelers that day was David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973), who years later would become the first prime minister of an independent Israel. Revered in his country as the "Father of the Nation," Ben-Gurion never forgot the reception he and his fellow Legionnaires received in Bangor.

"I remember it as if it were yesterday," Ben-Gurion wrote in 1965, responding to a query by Myer Minsky's son, Norman. "Please transmit to your father my deep appreciation for what he had done 47 years ago."

The founders of Beth Israel started life in 1888 with the dream of Zion in their prayer books and 60 years later their heirs rejoiced at the announcement that Israel was reborn.

As Israel continued to flourish during the 40 years after it was declared a Jewish homeland with the aid of the Bangor Zionist District and the community's sponsorship of dunams, the Zionist District continued in full force until the late 1980s, when participation began to dwindle somewhat.

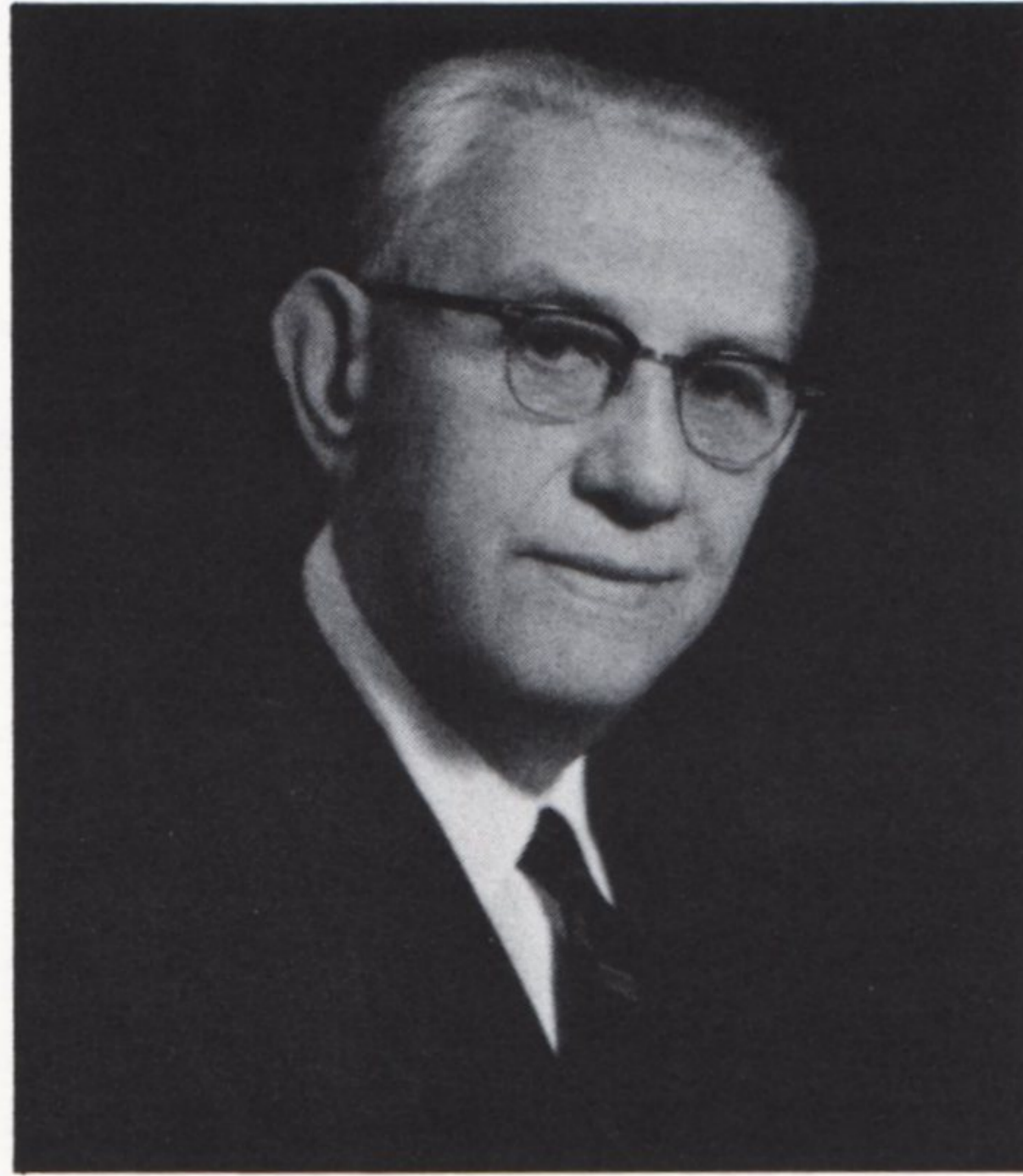
By 1988, the Zionist District, due to a misunderstanding in the Massachusetts leadership, had stopped collecting dues in Bangor. The community still contributed to the Jewish National Fund, and usually collected about \$4,000 during the High Holy Days.

Bond Drives remained popular and continued regularly at the Red Lion restaurant in Bangor.

Zionist District President Sam Rolsky, who took over after Minsky passed away in 1971, said that the future of Zionism was up to the youth of the congregation, and that he expected participation to increase as more of the older members of the community retired and moved to Israel.

By Henry Segal, John Ripley and Rick Levasseur

Beth Israel Honors These Men



Myer Minsky



Harry Epstein



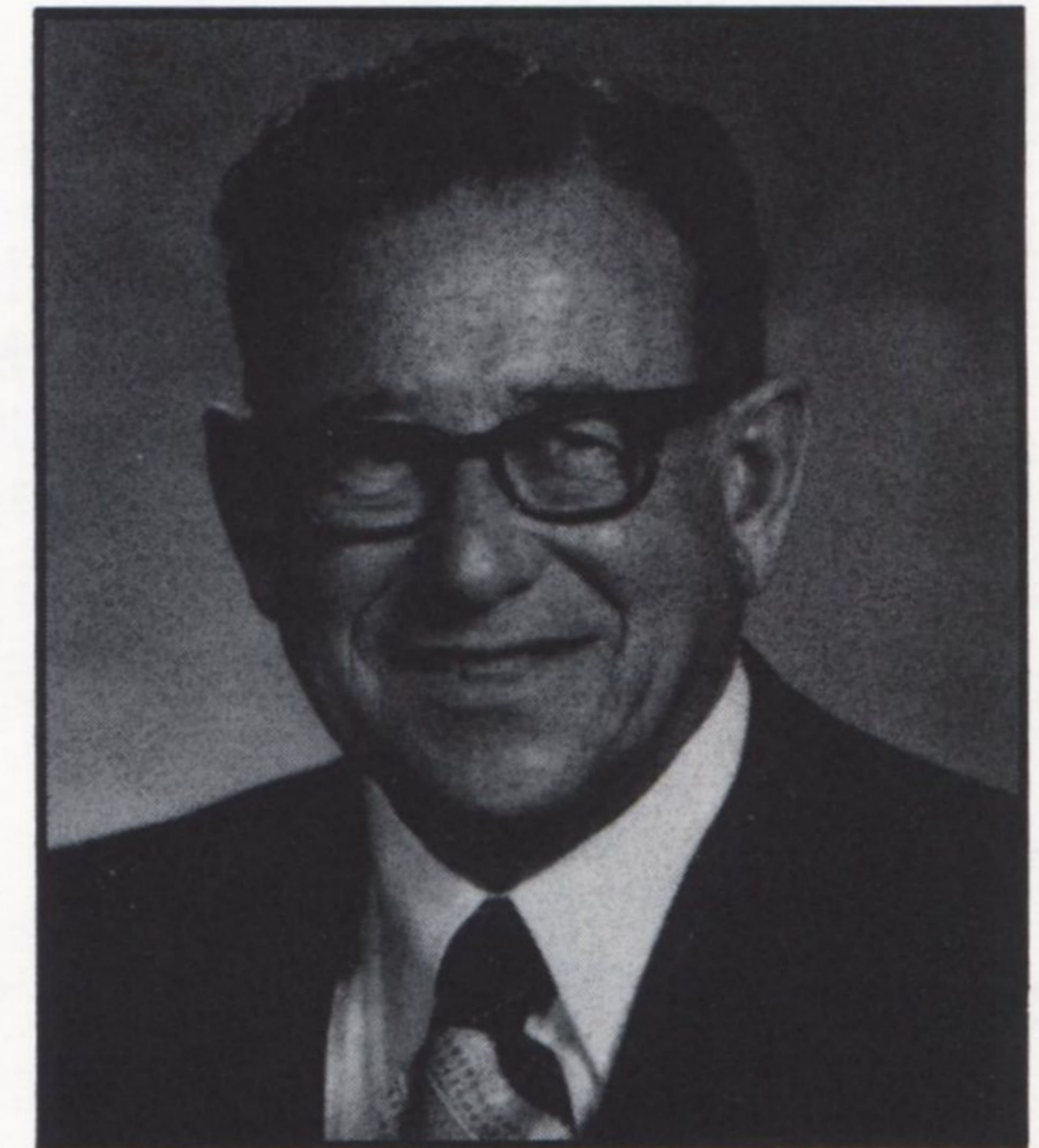
Abraham O. Emple



Rabbi Avraham Freedman



Abraham Stern




Samuel Rolsky

The board of trustees of Congregation Beth Israel has honored six men for their contributions to the synagogue. Although many people have faithfully contributed their time in the past and many continue to serve the needs of the synagogue today, these six men stood out in the minds of the directors of our synagogue. The citations, written by Henry Segal, hang in the vestry of the synagogue in honor of: Abraham O. Emple, Harry Epstein, Rabbi Avraham Freedman, Myer Minsky, Samuel Rolsky and Abraham Stern. To further honor these men, their citations have been reproduced on the following pages.

Citation

Harold R. Epstein, Immediate Past President Congregation Beth Israel

AROLD R. EPSTEIN, immediate past president of Congregation Beth Israel, you have been the recipient of many honors from your congregation which express the plaudits and the gratitude of the entire community. In making the momentous decision not to seek re-election, you exhibited a degree of courage and self-denial no less than that which gained for you the many honors heretofore.

One of the most pressing problems facing American Jewry today, is the task of preserving for the Synagogue its historic position of centrality in the American Jewish Community. There is unprecedented challenge ahead. There is great promise, and deep menace for the future of Judaism in our community. Our reach into the future can be creative and productive if we strive to nurture and develop the leadership so vital for the continued success of our Congregation. You are a prime example of our progress to preserve Tradition amid change, and to preserve change amid Tradition.

The rich and ennobling structure of the Beth Israel cultural and religious life will ever continue as an enduring tribute to your unceasing efforts. We recently paid homage to the Founders and Builders of Beth Israel. You, too, will be recognized as a Builder by the future generations. You will remain in the high and affectionate regard of your many friends upon whom you have made an abiding influence and impact. There is no nobler human record than one that encompasses an unbroken chain of several generations faithful to the age-old principles and ideals of a great people.

By your record for a quarter of a century, you have set before our people a conception of Synagogue duty, personal integrity and devotion to public service which is as noble as it is indispensable for the main-

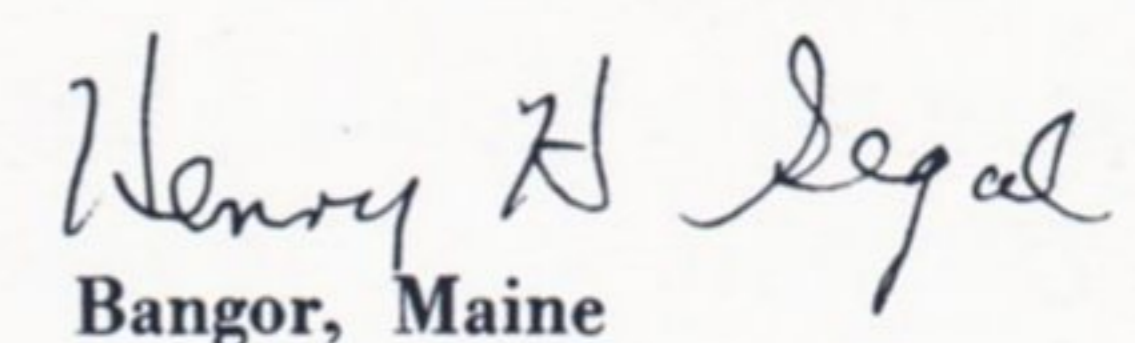
tenance of free institutions in a democratic society. You on many occasions abandoned the private pursuit of lucrative gain to devote your talents to the good and welfare of your Congregation.

Into synagogue administration, you came fortified with knowledge and strengthened by deep human sympathies; endowed with a temperament militant for the preservation of Judaism and conciliatory in judgment. Your instincts are deeply rooted in democratic faith. For democracy is part of your religious heritage. Your congregation elected and re-elected you as its president repeatedly but at no time was your candidacy inspired by selfish ambition. You proved yourself strong in friendship and undaunted in leadership during the difficult years that Beth Israel had experienced.

Your noble efforts will inspire us to approach our cause with a sense of dedication, dedication to the Synagogue, dedication to the eternal values of Torah and with this approach we shall meet the challenges of our day, create an enlightened laity and an effective congregation in the true tradition of Beth Israel. May you go from strength to greater strength and from glory to greater glory in the service of God and community.

We of this Congregation, dedicated to a deeper understanding, through loyalty to our heritage, of the spiritual growth of mankind through the gifts of Israel's religious genius, are happy to embrace you, Harold R. Epstein, as an honorary member of the Board of Directors of Congregation Beth Israel.

By a unanimous vote of the Board of Directors, we declare that you are entitled to all the Honors, Rights, and Privileges to that office appertaining. In token whereof, I hand you this citation.


Bangor, Maine
January 23, 1966
2 Shevat 5726

An Appreciation

Myer Minsky, Immediate Past Vice-President and Gabbai

Congregation Beth Israel

MYER MINSKY can look back on a career rich in service to the Jewish people, but among all his numerous and varied activities there is probably none in which he has found so great a degree of self-fulfilment as in his labors for Zion.

A consecrated leader of the Zionist movement, he was truly one of the pioneers in our community to acknowledge the supreme significance of a Jewish Homeland and the promise of fulfilment it held for the future of our people. It was through the genuine devotion and inspired leadership of men of the calibre of Myer Minsky that the State of Israel came to fruition in our lifetime. A Zionist from his early youth—and one who has made sacrifices for his Zionism—emotionally and intellectually a staunch Jew, a firm believer in the supremacy of spiritual values, an idealist by temperament, and a man of courage and wisdom, he seems, as one looks back, to have been almost predestined to be closely associated to that movement in which the spiritual ideals of Jewish survival were to be embodied.

In a generation not congenial to prophecy, Myer Minsky stood out as one of those who most nearly approached prophetic inspiration. It was Myer who reiterated other great leaders with a great new idea in our own little community, buttressing it by countless proofs from sacred texts: "Israel cannot survive except through the establishment of a political state." To us who by now are completely adjusted, his

ideas appear self-evident. But 50 years ago, when the horizon of the Jewish people was very limited, few men had the foresight manifested by Myer Minsky. Here is a man who would not be disheartened, because even in defeat he can remember how they were frustrated in their day but that ultimately their message penetrated men's hearts.

No man more eminently deserved to witness the consolation of Zion restored for no man in our time has spent himself more prodigally to bring "Hatikvah" into fulfilment. Of Myer it can be said he has kept his communion with the spirit that was the guiding destiny of the Jewish people to whom he is attached with an everlasting love. With inexhaustible energy and idealistic devotion, Myer Minsky has served the Talmud Torah, the Community Center, and, of course, Beth Israel. He is one of the very few precious individuals who have dedicated themselves to community endeavors. By the grace of his personal talent and ability he has risen to a position of prominence and leadership in our community. To those of us who have worked intimately with him whatever the endeavor he is a continuous source of "nachas."

We are happy to embrace you, Myer Minsky, as an honorary member of the Board of Directors of Congregation Beth Israel. By a unanimous vote of the Board of Directors, we declare that you are entitled to all the Honors, Rights, and Privileges to that office appertaining. In token whereof, I hand you this citation.

Henry H. Segal

Bangor, Maine

January 23, 1966

2 Shevat 5726

A Tribute

Abraham J. Stern, Immediate Past Secretary Congregation Beth Israel

ABE STERN IS ONE OF THOSE RARE AND SINGULAR individuals who combines so many facets, qualities and attainments with enviable ability and dignity. Eminent attorney, communal worker, and public official, he brings to each area of responsibility a degree of personal insight, scholarly background and high moral purpose, seldom found in one person.

His deep-rooted interest and devotion both to his profession and to the faith of his fathers have made of him an ardent supporter of democratic ideals. No one has fought harder than he for equal civic and political opportunity and respect for the rights of the individual, recognized both by religion and democracy as inalienable. Abe Stern lives democracy in his everyday coming and going, and he envisions a world in which men will live in freedom and dignity. By the very manner of his conduct in and out of his chosen profession, Abe has signified that our rights and our obligations as Jews are inextricably interwoven with our rights and obligations as human beings. According to Abe, religion is indeed a way of life, dictating all the actions of men, coloring all their thoughts.

Others will honor Abe for his dedicated practice of the Law. Our long and unforgettable impressions are rather of Abe Stern, the man, the human being, the wise, yea, even the saintly. . . the exquisite spirit, the charming comrade, the tireless loyal friend. Our community. . . our country. . . needs more men like Abe Stern. . . men who are not satisfied to give lip service to justice, mercy, and charity; men who translate abstract ideals into specific programs. . . men who cannot rest. He is a man devoted to Judaism for whom there can be no artificial separation between Synagogue and Community. His interest in synagogue affairs is not a casual or prefatory one. It has depth and substance because it stems from a conviction that the Synagogue is fundamental to Jewish survival. . . indeed, the only reliable guarantee for the survival of Jews as Jews.

There burns within him the quiet flame of love for his people. His consecration to Jewish life in all its aspects receive nourishment from

a deep source of religious faith. He believes profoundly in the possibility of a harmonious adjustment of Jewish and American life under the aegis of the democratic philosophy. Abe continues to be an ardent supporter of all worthy causes which aim to improve the lot of his fellow human beings. He has faithfully served on the boards of the Community Center, the Hebrew School, and many other social and philanthropic organizations receive his whole-hearted support. Abe has been a keen and incisive observer as well as an active participant in every important expression of Jewish life in this community. But no field of endeavor is as deeply indebted to him as is that of Congregation Beth Israel to which he has so generously devoted his rich gifts and dedicated effort.

We, his friends, are fully aware of his spiritual achievement which he is wresting out of the agony of the illness that has struck him. The more his body becomes bent, the more erect he stands in our eyes as a person of rare courage and genuine humanity. He has refused to become an invalid. The sadness we feel in these moments are compensated only by our realization that we are witnesses to an act of great heroism. We join in silent prayer that you be restored to health and vigor and that your continued presence with us constitute a blessing.

No words surpass in grandeur and truth the immortal phrases of the Prophet Micah in which the essentials of all religion are summed up without complications and without omissions. We know of no other man in this community who so literally interprets these words as our beloved friend Abe Stern. Of him we can surely say: He is just, he loves mercy, and he walks humbly with his God. What finer tribute can man pay to his fellow?

We are happy to embrace you, Abe, as an honorary member of the Board of Directors of Congregation Beth Israel. By a unanimous vote of the Board of Directors, we declare that you are entitled to all Honors, Rights, and Privileges to that office appertaining. In token whereof, I hand you this citation.

Henry H. Segal

Bangor, Maine

January 23, 1966

2 Shevat 5726

Congregation Beth Israel

Citation For Religious Leadership

to

Rabbi Avraham Freedman

1949 - 1969

For Exemplary Service to Congregation Beth Israel, Enduring Loyalty to the Ideals of Our Faith, Self-sacrificial Labors in the Enrichment of American Life Through Traditional Judaism

RABBI AVRAHAM FREEDMAN HAS BEEN THE RECIPIENT of many honors which express the plaudits and the gratitude of our community by men of goodwill of all creeds. Ours is the privilege through these simple ceremonies to voice the appreciation of Congregation Beth Israel.

Rabbi Freedman has achieved distinction and historic status in the annals of Beth Israel through his 20 years of devoted service to the Congregation and the community. He is one of the eminent spiritual leaders of the New England area. Rabbi Freedman is a rabbi by inner compulsion; it is his special talent. A traditional Jew who reveres the ancient modes and rituals, he has pleaded for the creative use of this tradition. Rabbi Freedman is at his best when he explains Jewish concepts and institutions. For him, religion is not reliance on GOD alone but a kind of synthesis between GOD and man, which urges us to accept the universe and to sing a song of affirmation to life. His influence is felt not only in the Jewish community, but extends in ever widening circles to many non-Jews who find his religious philosophy both illuminating and relevant to contemporary problems.

Rabbi Freedman came into our midst fortified with a knowledge of TORAH and strengthened by deep human sympathies; endowed with a temperament militant in the preservation of the tradition of our fathers and conciliatory in judgment. During these critical years in Jewish history, Beth Israel has projected him on the stage of community affairs, where his superb command of language, his controlled yet effective passion have made him the best known voice in our history. One has only to hear his addresses to know that he is both lover and master of words. With accuracy, understanding and eloquence he has related the Jewish position on theology, social justice and humanistic values.

To his rabbinical duties Rabbi Freedman has brought rich gifts of character as a human being. He is fair-minded and gracious. He possesses a keen insight into men and events. He is wise in his humility before the struggles, sorrows and accomplishments of his generation. He is sensitively aware of the meaning of the passing scene for the destiny of the Jewish people.

The record of Rabbi Avraham Freedman's achievements and significant contributions is far more eloquent than any panegyric. He has set before our people a concept of civic duty, personal integrity and devotion to the service of our Congregation which is as noble as it is indispensable to the maintenance of free institutions in a democratic society.

No rabbi in the 80 year history of Beth Israel has so perfectly identified himself with the interests of his congregation and his people at home and abroad. We have demanded that Rabbi Freedman be pastor, preacher, educator, as well as Jewish representative to our Christian neighbors. Public relations took the traditional form of the active ambassadorship. Endowed with the talents for the office, he has broken down the barriers of prejudice, opened the gates of goodwill and friendship, and has inspired trust and confidence in our fellow Americans. Rabbi Freedman has acquitted himself brilliantly in these manifold duties.

As great paintings can be appreciated only from a distance, so can the stature of men be understood only in the perspective of time. We may estimate the power of their personalities during their tenure of office, but only after their departure can we measure the effects of their work upon our generation. Indeed the labors of men are to the end that future generations may reap the fruits of their toil. The reward of the spiritual leader is indicated in an obscure passage of the Book of Daniel, 12.3. . . . And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn the many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

We wonder whether Rabbi Freedman's destiny is not calling him to the Land of Israel. Notwithstanding the position he has held with Congregation Beth Israel, perhaps the Rabbi is seeking to contribute to the spiritual resuscitation of the new nation. In making the decision to take leave of us during the present period of unrest Rabbi Freedman has exhibited a degree of loyalty, courage and perhaps even self-denial.

No expression of appreciation of the works of Rabbi Freedman can possibly be complete without reference to his beloved wife, Hannah. Her superlative qualities of personality, and her own distinguished service to our Congregation, her inspiring and spiritual standards of leadership in our Sisterhood, have possibly served as the Almighty's own poetic reward for her husband's worth and works.

Rabbi Avraham Freedman will be missed but his influence will continue to be felt and we shall remember him as a good friend and counselor. It is our fervent hope that he will not sever relations with us and that out of Jerusalem he will send forth the words of TORAH which will serve us in good stead and fortify our will to carry on.

We wish Rabbi and Mrs. Freedman Godspeed.

Henry H. Segal

Bangor, Maine

June 17, 1969

1 Tammuz 5729

Congregation Beth Israel

Distinguished Service Award

Honorary Gabbai And Baal Tefillah

Abraham O. Emple

'with the aged there is wisdom, and the long-lived possess understanding.'

Talmud, Shabbat 152 A

In recognition of a broad and humane spirit of concern which he has expressed through his devoted services as Gabbai and Baal Tefillah for the past forty years. Asher Emple, as he is fondly called, has been a frontier participant in Beth Israel's coming of age, and has won the admiration of all who have served with him in the generations past and present.

He is a man, for all his practicalities, not without the vision of the idealist. He knows how to compromise . . . not with ideals but with the tempo of their fulfillment. He is a man who sometimes appears aloof, but his aloofness is only the outward reflection of his calmness. He is a man truly devoted to the welfare of his congregation, a man who holds sacrosanct the elements of righteousness, a man who is an ardent believing Jew.

His Synagogue activities are a sincere expression of his innermost feelings, for although he is not given to visible manifestations of sentiment, he is deeply concerned about the future of Beth Israel.

His quiet manner, personal integrity and relentless pursuit of the tradition of our people have made him a living symbol of the ideal of the truly religious life expressed in the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God.

Gabbai Emple, endowed with a spirit of compassion and openness to the needs of men, has worked tirelessly throughout his life with deep personal commitment to preserve the traditional standards of Judaism.

Modest, unassuming, shrinking from any form of pretense and ostentation, he lives a quiet but productive life. His nobility of character, his labors and achievements are hailed and appreciated. We, his friends, are aware of his rugged honesty, his sympathetic attitude and his gentlemanly bearing.

May his continued presence with us constitute a blessing. We pray that these thoughts concerning Gabbai Emple will be an inspiration to those who today, and in the years to come, will carry on the work of Congregation Beth Israel.

Because of our happy association with Asher Emple, because of our conviction that Congregation Beth Israel has been most faithfully and devotedly served by him, and because of our privilege and good fortune to know him as a synagogue devotee and friend, it is the Congregation's desire to record permanently its sincere appreciation of his able and successful leadership. His many colleagues and friends extend their heartfelt wishes for his good health and happiness in the years ahead.

We are happy to embrace you, Gabbai Emple, as an honorary member of Congregation Beth Israel. By a unanimous vote of the Board of Directors, we declare that you are entitled to all Honors, Rights, and Privileges to that function appertaining. In token whereof, I hand you this citation.

Henry H. Segal

Bangor, Maine

November 12, 1972

6 Kislev 5733

Congregation Beth Israel

Founded 1888

Citation for Exemplary Service

to

Samuel Rolsky, the Levite

Past President, Past Treasurer, Baal Tefillah
Encumbent Gabbai Rishon

then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said:
'Whoso is on the Lord's side, let him come unto me.' And
all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto
him.

EXODUS XXXII, 26

Over the years, Samuel Rolsky has brought to each of these areas of his responsibility a high degree of enduring loyalty and self-sacrificial labors for the enrichment of our American way of life through Traditional Judaism.

To his duties as Gabbai Rishon he has brought rich gifts of character. As a human being he is fair-minded and gracious. He is wise in his humility before the struggles, sorrows and accomplishments of his generation. He is sensitively aware of the passing scene for the destiny of our congregation.

He is a man devoted to Judaism for whom there can be no artificial separation between Synagogue and Community. Sam's interest in synagogue affairs is not a casual or perfunctory one. It has depth and substance and stems from a conviction that the synagogue, as an institution, is fundamental to Jewish survival.

We, your fellow congregants are keenly aware of your broad and humane spirit of concern for Beth Israel and its affiliates and that you are more concerned with unifying our membership rather than perpetuating religious divisions. Your synagogue activities are a sincere expression of your innermost feeling though you are not given to visible manifestations of sentiment.

Sam Rolsky is in the vanguard of those seeking to preserve the basic rituals of the Jewish religion as a sacred trust not subject to the whims and caprices of those seeking change that virtually threatens the traditions of our forefathers. He is truly a defender of the faith.

As a descendent of the Tribe of Levi, we cannot help but to speculate that a touch of mysticism pervades the religiosity of Sam Rolsky that extends from the Home to the House of Worship and continues to influence yet another generation of his progeny in matters of basic Jewish ritual.

As we approach our centennial year we shall pay homage to our founders and builders of Congregation Beth Israel. You, too, will be accorded the recognition of a builder in the generic sense by future generations.

Your noble efforts will continue to inspire us to approach our duties with a sense of dedication to Beth Israel and the eternal values of Torah. With this demeanor we shall meet the challenge of our day, create an enlightened laity in the true tradition of Congregation Beth Israel.

By your record of achievements these past forty years you have set before our people an example of synagogue duty and devotion to public service which is as noble as it is indispensable for the maintenance of a religious institution in a free society.

The name of Samuel Rolsky is synonymous with philanthropic and educational endeavors and are unhampered by the bounds of creed or race. He is an ardent supporter of the State of Israel emotionally and financially.

No words pass in grandeur the immortal phrases of the prophet Micah in which the essentials of all religion are summed up without complications and without omissions.

Of our brother, Sam Rolsky, we can say:

He is just, he loves mercy, and he
walks humbly with his God.

What finer tribute can man pay to his fellow?

May you go from strength to greater strength in the service of God and community.

We of the Congregation, dedicated to a deeper understanding through loyalty to our heritage, of the spiritual growth of mankind through the gifts of Israel's religious genius, are happy to embrace you, Samuel Rolsky, as an Honorary Member of the Board of Directors of Congregation Beth Israel.

By a unanimous vote of the Board of Directors, we declare that you are entitled to all the Honors, Rights, and Privileges to that office appertaining.

In token whereof, I hand you this citation. May you go from strength to greater strength in the service of God and community.

Henry H. Segal

1986

Beth Israel's Cemetery Committee & Chevra Kadisha

A Jewish cemetery, in the traditional parlance of Jewry, is a Beth Olam, a "House of Eternity," a term that may be said to combine a love for euphemisms with a belief in immortality.

Life without the rituals of his religion was bearable for a Jew, but burial in unsanctified soil was not to be thought of. Hence it was that in this community as in many other communities, before a synagogue — before any other community project — a Jewish cemetery was the first step toward religious identity. Our founders, faced with the choice of burying their dead in a non-Jewish cemetery, decided in a positive Jewish spirit to seek ground which could be called Jewish to cover the remains of their dear ones.

In the earliest years of its existence the cemetery was owned and supervised by the Independent Order of the Sons of Benjamin, a fraternal order organized in 1885 for the sole purpose of maintaining a burial ground for the Orthodox Jewish community of Bangor. The sense of community gave this band of fellow Israelites the impetus to organize the Chevra Kadisha. Even as the patriarch Abraham purchased for 400 shekels of silver, from the children of Heth, a plot for a grave for his beloved Sarah, so did the Independent Order of the Sons of Benjamin, the forerunner of the Beth Israel Society, purchase from the city of Bangor a plot of ground for \$45.

This was not the first time a burial society was to precede a synagogue. In many parts of Europe, the only collective property the Jews were allowed to own was the cemetery. The synagogues were often privately owned chapels. The organization of this burial society was not only an act of reverence for the dead, it was an act of loyal committal to our future in these United States. The soil where our dead are buried is hallowed soil because memory transmutes common clays into sanctuaries.



One of the entrances to the new section of the Beth Israel cemetery.

Tom Hindman Photo

It was not until 1907 that Congregation Beth Israel formally purchased this tract on Webster Avenue for \$335. Eventually, more land on Mount Hope Avenue was purchased.

The congregation has a genuine sense of pride in its possession of what poet Henry W. Longfellow has so fittingly called "God's acre." In this "House of Eternity" we have the symbol not of the dark and gloomy shadow of the fear of death, but rather the tangible possession of a beautiful and rich garden of memories. While it is the resting place of our physical destiny, it is also the hallowed ground in which we mix our tears with the sacred ashes of our departed. Thus the physical earth becomes the spiritual symbol of life, death and immortality.

The cemetery was for a long time the most important adjunct of this congregation. Their full youthful energies devoted to the acquisition of a firm economic hold in the new land, our early immigrants inevitably neglected the amenities of social intercourse and the joys of religious fellowship. But death was a more insistent creditor.

In 1907, within a year after the purchase of the cemetery from the Sons of Benjamin, the congregation, which had dwindled to 63 members, swelled to more

than 90. The first to be interred in the burial ground on Webster Avenue was Sarah Goldman, wife of Israel Goldman. Congregation records reveal that, in a less medically advanced age, a high mortality incidence prevailed among the children.

In 1988 the synagogue was using three of the five sections in its cemetery on Mount Hope Avenue. Cemetery Committee Chairman David Adelman said plans are under way to prepare the remaining sections for future use. He said the committee plans to have roads built and shrubs planted in sections 4 and 5 in the spring of 1989.

The development of the cemetery over the years is a reminder of the dedicated efforts of Harold Epstein, who died Aug. 18, 1987, and Dr. Joseph Ornstein, who passed away Nov. 18, 1985. Those dedicated men looked after the last inevitable needs of our members, as well as supervising improvements, landscaping and care of the grounds. This hallowed ground is truly a place of peace and beauty.

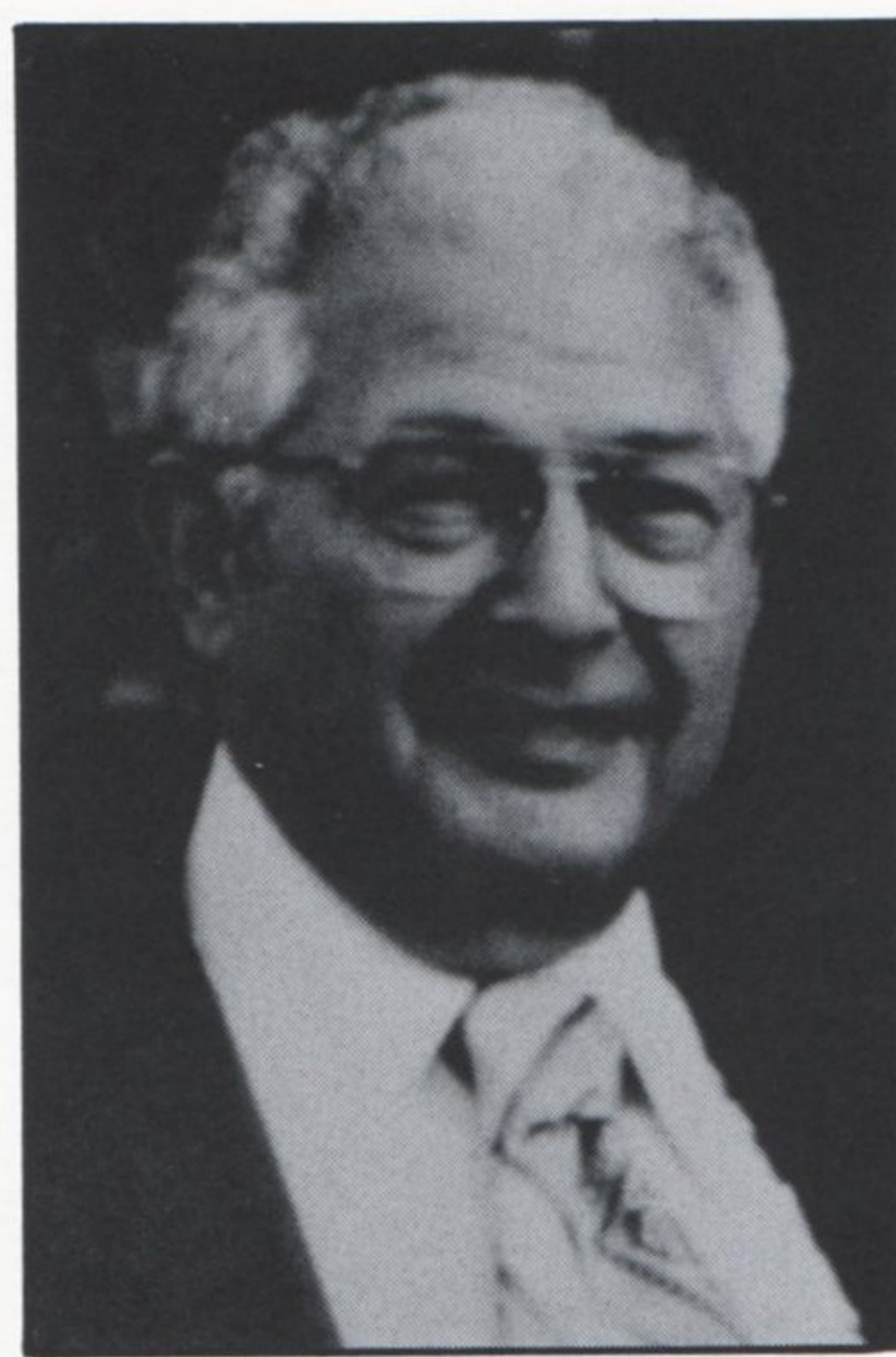
Now, as Epstein and Ornstein had done in the past, David Adelman carries on the duties as a devoted member of the shul.

The perpetual care fund of the congregation provides for permanent care of the resting place of the beloved departed. A contribution made during life or a bequest directed in a last will and testament, provides the necessary funds in each instance.

The Chevra Kadisha

The function of the Chevra Kadisha is the preparation of the body for burial according to the prescribed rules. This first mutual-aid society gave assurance of a Jewish burial with Jewish rites. It had been a primary concern of Jews for thousands of years. It was to provide for this — financially and religiously — that the Chevra Kadisha, or burial society, had been formed in the Jewish communities of Europe, and as an institution it was several centuries old. In America it grew up within the synagogue. The society performed many functions including praying by the side of the corpse, preparing the body for burial, and seeing that there would be a minyan of mourners after the funeral. The society also served as overseers of the cemetery. The Chevra Kadisha was the first religious organization to be created by our founders and preceded the establishment of the synagogue itself.

It was considered a matter of religious merit to belong to the Chevra Kadisha, and its membership included the leading personalities of the community. Every new member had to pay an entrance fee and had his name registered in the minute book. During the first year he had to take part in the burial rites, and it was not until some time later that he was entitled to vote in



Joseph Ornstein



Harold Epstein

the election of officers or himself be a candidate for office.

The executive board consisted of the gabbaim and their immediate assistants, who were elected annually on the second of the intermediate days of Passover. In order to stimulate the enthusiasm of the members a seudah was arranged for them every year on the 15th day of Kislev. The first seudah of which we have record took place in December 1894. It was voted to spend \$6 for this gala affair and the following were appointed to make the arrangements: Israel and Hanna Frank, Joseph and Malcha Bernstein, Simon Kominsky, Morris Golden, and Sam Dennis.

In the early days of the congregation the Chevra Kadisha undoubtedly used a horse and wagon to carry the dead to the cemetery. By 1915, the congregation purchased a hearse and hired a horse from a local livery when the occasion arose. This was the first hearse to be owned and operated by a local synagogue. It is recorded that the Chevra Kadisha rented the hearse to the other two synagogues for a "small fee."

Harry Epstein, one of the longtime leaders of the Chevra Kadisha, retired as chairman in 1982. Neil Glazier was then appointed by President Harold Baron to succeed him as chairman. Epstein continued to serve on the Chevra Kadisha as an honorary member and remained active until his death.

Members of the 1988 Chevra Kadisha are: David Adelman, Rose Baron, Norman Bravemen, Ron Dennis, Dave Dorsky, Grace Dorsky, Arnold Garson, Alan Glazier, Frances Glazier, Neil Glazier (Gabbai), Joan Golden, Edgar Goldsmith, Hazel Goldsmith, Jerome Goldsmith, James Goodman, Mike Goodman, Michael Kaprow, Bernard Kubetz, David Leen, David Lieberman, Adele Miller, Bernard Miller, Gloria Miller, Sanford Miller, Beryl Ruben, Rabbi Joseph Schonberger, Irwin Singer, Marshall Stern, David Striar, Miles Theeman and Sharon Theeman.

By Henry Segal and John Ripley



Members of the 1988 Chevra Kadish include (front, left to right) Edgar Goldsmith, Dave Dorsky, Neil Glazier, Billy Miller, David Adelman, (back, left

to right) David Leen, Miles Theeman, David Lieberman, Sanford Miller, Bernie Kubetz, Irwin Singer, Alan Glazier and David Striar. (Brian Higgins Photo)



Members of the 1988 Chevra Kadisha include (front, left to right) Adele Miller, Sharon Theeman, Frances Glazier, Gloria Miller, (back, left to right)

Hazel Goldsmith, Grace Dorsky, Beryl Rubin and Rose Baron. (Brian Higgins Photo)

The United Jewish Chapel

New residents of the Jewish community in Bangor, and those who have lived here less than a quarter of a century, may view the existence of a funeral chapel as a given. However, it was not always so. Until March 25, 1952, when the United Jewish Chapel was incorporated, there was not even a hint that such a facility would be available for use in times of sorrow. And it was not until later in that decade that it was actually used.

It took many meetings and intense hard work to make the dream a reality. Before that time, funerals were held at the home, and there was no place except the living room or bedroom to prepare the body or hold services. There had long been a heartfelt need for an alternative, but it took 40 years of campaigning by Annie Berger, one of the first Jewish settlers in Bangor, to get the ball rolling.

Mrs. Berger used to buttonhole everyone she could at funerals to impress upon them the need for a formal structure to serve the community, according to those who remember the early days before the chapel existed. A plaque to her memory within the present chapel attests to her efforts. She was the mother of attorney Shirley Berger, in whose office the first meeting of the fledgling chapel society was held and continued to be held for many years.

In the articles of incorporation, which were signed in Berger's office, Harry Broder was elected the first president. Louis Rolnick was elected vice president; Abraham J. Stern, secretary; and Shirley Berger, treasurer. Elected unanimously to the board of directors were Stern, Broder, James A. Cahners, Myer Minsky, David Goldberg, Albert J. Schiro, Louis Rolnick, and Berger. Upon the death of Harry Broder in August 1953, Albert Schiro assumed the presidency. Abe Berg was elected to the board of directors to replace Broder. In 1956 Harry Epstein became a director.

Once incorporation was accomplished, the next step was the selection of a site and construction.

Albert Schiro had purchased a lot at the corner of Grove and State streets, which he turned over to the corporation for the sum of \$18,000. The corporation borrowed the money from Merrill Trust Co. The lot was subsequently sold for \$22,000 to the American Oil Co.



The United Jewish Chapel on Center Street in Bangor.

Tom Hindman Photo

Albert Schiro and Shirley Berger were named to the Building Committee to look into a possible site for the new chapel. They settled on a lot on Center Street owned by Robert Cohen, for the sum of \$3,000. This land was the site of the first synagogue in Bangor.

Bids for the actual construction of the chapel were solicited. In March 1953, at the annual meeting of the board of directors, the contract was awarded to Perry & Morrill for the sum of \$37,450, and construction was begun. The original architect for the venture was John Larsson, but before the building was completed, three architects had died, according to Berger. A fundraising campaign brought pledges in slowly, but eventually the campaign succeeded.

In 1954 plans were made for the formal opening of the chapel. Two years later 29 families already had used the chapel. By March 1961, 107 people had used it.

At the annual meeting in March 1959, it was reported that the bank loan had been paid in full and the chapel was free of debt.

In 1984 only four of the original board members were alive — Shirley Berger, Albert J. Schiro, Louis Rolnick, and Harold Epstein — and it was decided to meet June 29 to elect new members. Warren M. Silver was elected president, Jerome Kirstein was elected vice president, Norman Minsky was elected secretary/clerk, and Stephen Emery was elected treasurer. In addition to the new officers, the four remaining original board members joined the new board.

By Riva Berman

Congregation Beth Israel Sisterhood

Twenty-five years ago, Beth Israel Sisterhood President Hannah Freedman wrote that "success did not come easily. It was brought about by the willingness of many dedicated workers who carried out their tasks on a high plane of efficiency and devotion."

In 1988, as Beth Israel celebrates a century of perpetuating the Jewish faith and culture in the Bangor area, Mrs. Freedman's words are no less true.

Today, the sisterhood has been in existence for almost 40 years, and the organization continues to strive to meet the goals of its threefold program as Mrs. Freedman outlined them — "to beautify the synagogue, provide spiritual and cultural stimuli for its members and meet the social needs of the congregation."

The fund-raising efforts of the sisterhood are well-publicized. Many outside the congregation know of the sisterhood's goods and services auctions held approximately every other year.

A bat and ball from Red Sox star Dwight Evans, a silver tray from Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward, Carol Burnett's mop cap and a script for Henry Winkler's character "The Fonz" have been among the many items which have made the auction a popular and visible activity of the sisterhood. Local merchants and business people also have given generously.

And more importantly, the auctions have helped the group in its efforts to "beautify the synagogue" over the years. In the last decade, that has included renovating the kitchen in 1980, remodeling and adding a bathroom in 1985, and general work and carpeting in 1988.

The kitchen is an integral part of both the life of the synagogue and the work of the sisterhood. Hanukkah parties, Purim parties, Passover seders and Shabbat dinners are all fruits of the members' labor.

The sisterhood is also well-known for its choral cantatas during Hanukkah.

A winter carnival for the New England region of United Synagogue Youth and Friday night children's services are examples of the sisterhood's contributions to youth of the congregation. The group also has sponsored attendance at charities — including chemical-free graduation parties.

During this centennial year, the sisterhood has sponsored a number of events, including the appearance of Rabbi Harold Kushner.

And on Nov. 9, 1988, the 50th anniversary of "Kristallnacht," Beth Israel Sisterhood had as its program a talk on "German Jewish Writers on the Eve

of Kristallnacht," by Professor William Small of the University of Maine.

Other program topics sponsored for its membership include crafts, music, wills, foreign exchange programs and women's health.

All are ways for the sisterhood to "provide spiritual and cultural stimuli for its members and meet the social needs of the congregation."

It is no wonder that sisterhoods are considered the backbone of their congregations. Rabbi A.H. Freedman said nearly 40 years ago, "In the sisterhood, a synagogue has a treasure that is priceless."

In 1949, the officers were: Bess Minsky, president; Dorothy Broder, secretary; and Esther Dresner, treasurer.

A list of the presidents of the sisterhood is indicative of the caliber of women who have enabled the organization to do so much during its almost 40 years. In most cases, the presidents have served in other offices and on committees as well.

Bess Minsky (1949-1951)
Ruth Gelbert (1951-1952)
Hannah Freedman (1952-1953)
Helen Stone (1953-1954)
Ruth Epstein (1954-1955)
Bertha Robinson (1955-1958)
Barbara Ollove (1958-1959)
Helen Stone (1959-1960)
Florence Wittner (1960-1962)
Hannah Freedman (1962-1963)
Ida Schiro (1963-1964)
Marion Laeger (1964-1965)
Helen Schiro (1965-1966)
Roberta Mogul (1966-1967)
Dorothy Ornstein (1967-1968)
Helen Schiro (1968 acting president)
Rosalie Shapero (1971-1972)
Annette Chason (1972-1973)
Eleanor Chason (1973-1974)
Frieda Miller (1974-1975)
Connie Kelsey (1975-1976)
Connie Kelsey, Frieda Miller,
Eleanor Chason (1976-1977)
Paula Adelman (1977-1979)
Arlene Rosen (1979-1981)
Susan Garson (1981-1983)
Fran D'Errico (1983-1985)
Paula Adelman, Fran D'Errico (1985-1986)
Patti Tableman (1986-1988)
Sharon Theeman (1988)

In addition to President Sharon Theeman, the other officers in 1988 are: Susan W. Schonberger, vice president; Hilda Goodstein, treasurer; Marjorie Goodman, recording secretary; Karen White-Rogers, financial secretary; and Mollie Stern, corresponding secretary.

The sisterhood appreciates the support of the more than 140 women who have become life members over the years. Life members of the sisterhood, as of the end of October 1988, are:

Sarah Schiro, Ida Schiro, Edna Rapaport, Lillian Braidy, Helen Schiro, Mollie Emple, Irene Rudman, Ruth Epstein, Ruth Tabenken, Lena Friedman.

Frances Pilot, Hilda Goodman, Helen Stone, Sarah Striar, Pauline Rapaport, Rose Rudman, Eleanor Israel, Sylvia Berson, Ida Shur.

Ethel Rapaport, Sadie Glazier, Julia Saltzman, Lillian Lacritz, Minnie Kominsky, Anna Epstein, Rosalie Shapero, Dorothy Emple, Hannah Freedman, Estelle Kupsenel.

Rae Gross, Edith Grossman, Judith Rudman, Inez Rudman, Bess Minsky, Rose Rapaport, Pauline Dresner, Hilda Rosen, Theresa Cohen, June Bayer.

Freda Bayer, Charlotte Broder, Marion Rosen, Isabelle Davidson, Ida Joy Rudom, Edith Wolman, Dolores Schiro, Paula Kagan, Joyce Ollove, Barbara Ollove.

Jennie Rubin, Violet Shur, Pearl Singer, Dorothy Ornstein, Ida Rolsky, Patricia Viner, Marcella Glazier, Arlene Offenber, Sarah Mendelson, Doris Mendelson.

Nathalie Day, Rose Alpert, Frances Glazier, Alfreda Segal, Sylvia Friedman, Estelle Rich, Sally Striar, Sarah Fogelman, Pauline Rudman, Anne Brown.

Maxine Lieberman, Anna Abrahams, Esther Dresner, Mildred Striar, Naomi Lown, Sylvia Rolsky, Paula Adelman, Susan Garson, Anne Levine.

Marsha Carlin, Harriet Glass, Lois Higer, Elaine Braverman, Rachel Schiro, Marcia Lieberman, Elaine Rubin, Lorraine Miller, Rose Baron, Marjorie Goodman, Dorothy Higer.

Helen Epstein, Fannie Cohen, Miriam Viner, Elsa Cohen, Fay Goodman, Sarah Rich Lait, Eleanor Chason, Lillian Emple, Lena Dennis, Annette Chason.

Edith Stern, Frieda Miller, Ruth Shurman, Anna Leavitt, Mollie Leavitt, Lillian Goldstein, Janice Povich, Sadie Brenin, Anna Kaminsky, Katherine Carver.



Officers and board members of the 1988 Beth Israel Sisterhood include (front, left to right) Susan Schonberger, Karen White-Rogers, Hilda Goodstein, Sharon Theeman, (back, left to right) Sylvia Rolsky, Paula Adelman, Sue Garson, Donna Stern, Arlene Rosen, Mollie Stern, Constance Kelsey, Annette Chason and Fran D'Errico. (Brian Higgins Photo)



Some of the women who have served as president of the Beth Israel Sisterhood are (front, left to right) Arlene Rosen, Annette Chason, Ida Schiro, Constance Kelsey, Frieda Miller, (back, left to right) Fran D'Errico, Rosalie Shapero, Patti Tableman, Barbara Ollove, Paula Adelman, Ruth Epstein, Eleanor Chason and Roberta Mogul. (Brian Higgins Photo)

Susan Baron, Roberta Mogul, Clara Mogul, Lena Sclair, Arlene Rosen, Helen Tabenken, Mary Levy, Susan Paul, Gertrude Gover, Carla Ames Cohen.

Jean Chamoff, Dorothy Serota, Eva Chason, Renee Minsky, Constance Kelsey, Ethel Schiro, Rosalie Adelson, Jennie Ginsberg, Fannie Jacobson, Tibey Elfman.

Ruth Vener Emple, Ann Pilot, Adele Miller, Gloria Miller, Clara Striar, Diane Emple, Roslyn Kaprow, Susan Singer, Phyllis Shapiro, Rosalie Trager, Esther Rosen, Fran D'Errico, Mildreth Rapaport, Mildred Saltzman.

By Roxanne Moore Saucier

Violinist David Rubinoff Married at Beth Israel

World famous violinist David Rubinoff, a Russian immigrant whose concert music lifted the spirits of Americans during the Depression, took the music out of his heart one evening at Beth Israel Synagogue and replaced it with love.

Rubinoff married Mertice Ashby of Wichita Falls, Texas, in a simple ceremony Sept. 21, 1942, at Beth Israel Synagogue. Rubinoff had played in Bangor earlier in his career in a benefit for the Bangor Daily News' Santa Claus Fund. He revisited Bangor in 1942 to perform six concerts at various schools and at the Bangor Opera House. During his busy schedule he found time to get married.

Rubinoff, 45, married the 28-year-old Texas beauty queen in a traditional Jewish ceremony, conducted by Rev. Joseph P. Rakusin. Jack Rapaport of Bangor was his best man.

Rubinoff, according to the Bangor Daily News, said it was important that his marriage took place following the Yom Kippur observance. Despite the fact that Rubinoff's entire life involved music, there was no music at the ceremony.

The new Mrs. Rubinoff told the Bangor Daily News that it was wonderful being married to David. When asked what role she would play in his musical life, she said, "I'll play second fiddle."

Mr. and Mrs. Rubinoff received numerous telegrams of congratulations including one from Eddie and Ida Cantor.

While his concerts provided him success, his meetings with children meant much more to him. In Bangor he visited four schools and explained the importance of music and education.

Although Rubinoff was an international success, he wasn't too big to remember his friends or the small American towns that usually didn't get to see such a well-known celebrity. He once said there was no place too large or too small for good music.

In 1963 Rubinoff made numerous stops in Maine. In September of that year he returned to Bangor and spent the Jewish holidays with Mr. and Mrs. Jack



David Rubinoff married Mertice Ashby of Wichita Falls, Texas, at Beth Israel Synagogue on Sept. 21.

1942. Rev. Joseph P. Rakusin conducted the ceremony and Jack Rapaport of Bangor was the best man.

Rapaport. While in Bangor he addressed the Bangor Kiwanis Club. He told the members about the changes he had seen in Bangor, and how much he missed his old and close friend, Fred D. Jordan, former publisher of the Bangor Daily News.

Explaining why he took time out of his busy schedule to observe the Jewish holidays, Rubinoff said, "People should have religion in their hearts and the least I can do is to observe my holidays out of respect for my parents." He told the group, "The greatest thing God ever created was work. If people will work they will succeed."

Also during his visit he entertained students in Ellsworth and Skowhegan. On Oct. 4 more than 1,000 people turned out to hear Rubinoff play his Stradivarius violin in two concerts at the Orono High School auditorium. In November he played for students in Presque Isle and Calais.

Maine cities weren't his only small-town stages.

Rubinoff played and lectured to more than 1,000 assemblies each year to inspire youngsters to study music. He stressed the need for music by quoting President John F. Kennedy who said, "The richest child is poor without musical knowledge."

Rubinoff's next publicized visit to Maine was in September 1971. During that month he performed concerts in Bangor, Brewer, Presque Isle and Biddeford. As usual, he played for the students in each of those cities.

In a talk to the Brewer Kiwanis Club, he recalled his marriage in 1942. "I think every Hebrew in town came to the wedding. There was not a speck of food left." He remembered Jack Rapaport, who had since died, with great affection. "Jack always invited us to dinner whenever we came to Maine and that year (1942) we stayed with the Rapaports," he was quoted in the Bangor Daily News. He recalled Jordan with similar affection and explained the circumstances of their first meeting. He told the Kiwanians that he met Jordan at a newspaper conference at which he was performing. "A man stood up in the audience . . . and said, 'Mr. Rubinoff, Maine would love to hear you.'" From that point on, they were friends for life.

The master musician owned many violins, but preferred to play his Romanov Stradivarius which was made in 1731 by Antonio Stradivari in Cremona, Italy. The instrument was insured for \$100,000.

Rubinoff started taking violin lessons in Grodno, Russia, at the age of 5. "We were a poor family and my mother took care of the clothes of the instructor's family," he told the Bangor Daily News. He later earned a scholarship to the Royal Conservatory of Warsaw and it was there that he began his climb to the top. In 1911 he met composer Victor Herbert who brought him to Pittsburgh to attend the Forbes School. He became the leader of the school's orchestra and worked part time in a cafe, where he played the violin. Rubinoff eventually became a soloist with the Pittsburgh Symphony and went on to become a guest conductor of numerous orchestras, according to a story in the Boston Globe.

He was hired as a conductor and soloist at the Paramount in New York City. After being seen by Rudy Vallee, Rubinoff was offered a contract with the Eddie Cantor show. He was a regular on the "Chase & Sanborn Hour" on NBC radio from 1931 to 1935.

Rubinoff also performed at the White House for Presidents Herbert C. Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy. Rubinoff, who once gave 13 concerts in one day in the Hannibal,



David Rubinoff holds his Stradivarius during a 1971 visit to Maine.

Bangor Daily News Photo

Mo., school system, performed for U.S. servicemen during the Korean and Vietnam wars.

He received a gold medal studded with diamonds and rubies from the Chicago Federation of Musicians for his 1937 performance at Grant Park in Chicago, which was attended by 225,000 people. More than 25,000 people had to be turned away from the concert.

Besides the gold medal and his Stradivarius, Rubinoff treasured a pocket watch he received from Will Rogers in 1932. The watch, which is 3 inches in diameter, has a poem engraved on it that says: "The clock of life is wound but once, and no man has the power to tell just when the hands will stop at late or early hour. Now is the only time we own. Love, live, toil, with a will, do not wait until tomorrow, for the clock may then be still."

The clock unfortunately stopped for the great violinist on Oct. 6, 1986. Rubinoff died of respiratory arrest at the age of 89.

For those Beth Israel members who remember his 1942 wedding and his vibrant personality, Rubinoff's music continues to play in their hearts.

By James Adam Emple

A Story Of Two Synagogues

When the Old Town Jewish community, after years of meeting in homes, stores, and other buildings, decided to build a synagogue, they built it for future generations to extend the strength of their religion beyond the bounds of time and their own lives.

In 1986, a little more than a generation after the community labored for its own shul, the Old Town synagogue closed its doors after the Jewish population dwindled to almost nothing.

The history of Temple Israel dates back to 1913, when the heads of the Jewish families organized services in the Lait building on South Water Street. Between 1913 and 1915, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur were observed in the Cutler building on North Main Street, and by late 1915, a building on Stillwater Avenue was purchased by Edwin Cutler, Hyman Lait, Barney Ginsberg, Samuel Gordon and Israel Cutler.

Services in the Stillwater Avenue shul continued regularly, and in 1945, after much discussion and consideration, the congregation purchased a plot of land on Center Street for the site of the new shul.

After final plans for the new building were completed, the old synagogue was sold in 1954. Ground-breaking ceremonies for the new shul were held in July 1953, and by 1955, the Old Town congregation was busy dedicating its new shul.

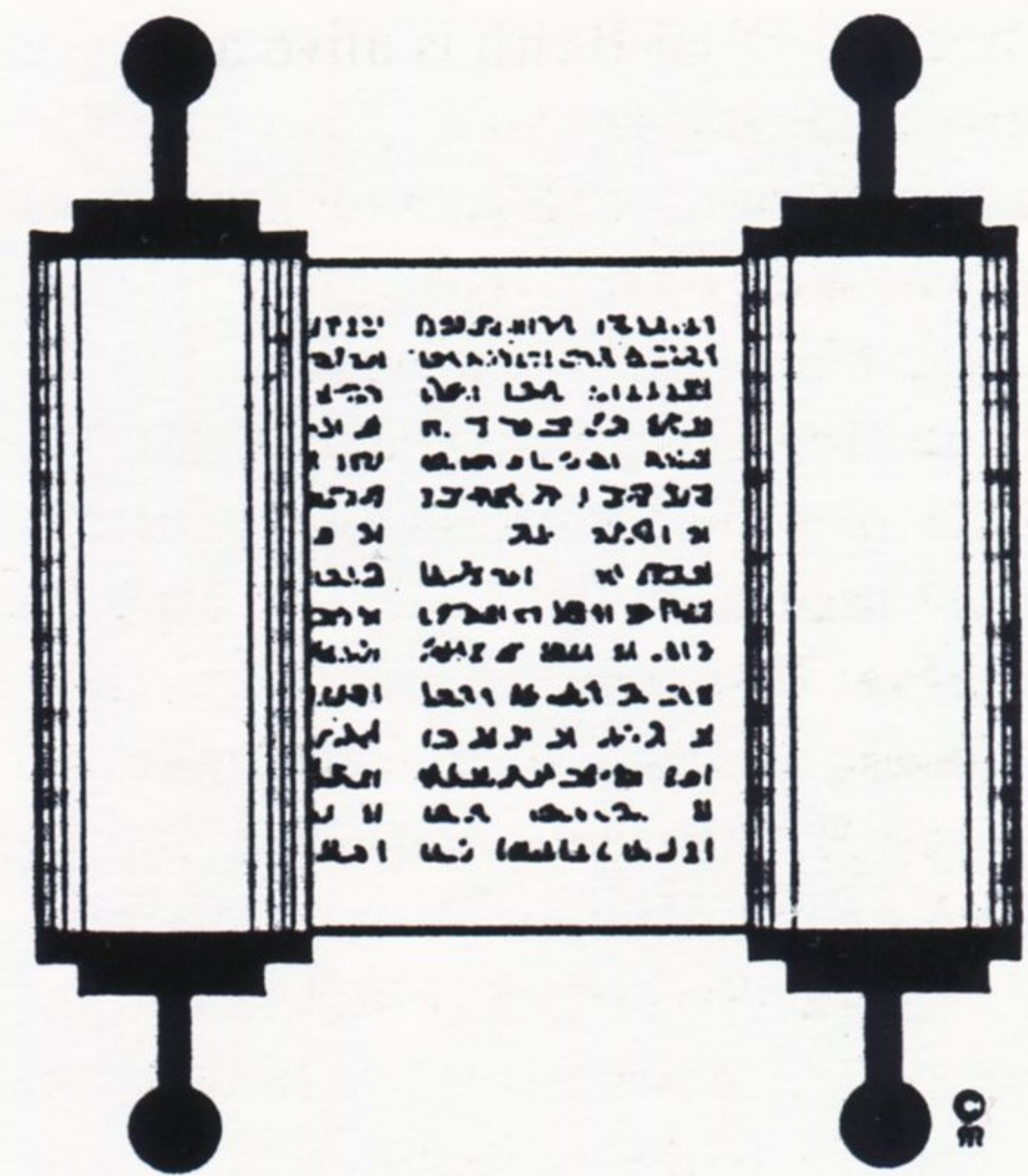
The dedication book that was published to mark the joyful occasion stated that the synagogue was built "in anticipation of the growth of the Jewish community in Old Town."

Over the years, however, the community declined. Elder members passed away, and their descendants left Old Town for larger communities. As late as 1985, the shul had a membership of 20 families, but many lived in retirement homes or spent winters out of state and could not attend services.

Eventually, the congregation had trouble raising a minyan for services, and shul President Walter Harris allowed women to be included in the minyan.

The decline in the congregation foreshadowed the end of the synagogue, although when the doors finally were closed in 1986, shul leaders waited two more years, hoping for an increase in membership before putting it up for sale.

The reason for the closing of Temple Israel never was one of money. The congregation toiled through rummage sales, bake sales and other fund-raising activities. Years before the last service was conducted at the shul, the building was paid for, and the synagogue even had a sizable bank account.



In order to attract members, Temple Israel held monthly, rather than weekly, services and activities, and maintained a more informal atmosphere and philosophy.

By 1988, Temple Israel was for sale, with the selling price dropping from \$80,000 to \$70,000 after few people expressed serious interest in purchasing it. The Torahs and memorial plaques followed some of the congregation to Beth Israel, and the building remained tucked away on its Center Street plot, the doors never opening, and serving as a monument to the strength and hopes of Judaism, and proof that times change.

Temple Israel was not the only synagogue that closed recently and left its memorial plaques in the care of Beth Israel.

In 1986, Congregation Chiam Yosef in Calais closed its doors for good after not being used for 20 years.

The problems that plagued the Orthodox shul were almost identical to those that closed Temple Israel — little money and a lack of members. As was the case of Old Town, the older members passed away and their children moved from the area.

The synagogue has since been demolished, and the scrolls were distributed to caretakers in Brookline, Mass., and in Montreal, Canada. The main scroll is housed in the Royal Bank of Canada in St. Stephen, New Brunswick. Also, the remaining religious items were sent to the Saint John Jewish Historical Society in Saint John, New Brunswick, and the memorial plaques to Beth Israel.

By John Ripley

B'nai B'rith, Pine Tree Lodge No. 817

The spirit of B'nai B'rith is alive and well in the hearts and minds of Bangor residents. Both Jews and non-Jews alike agree that over the years, B'nai B'rith, Pine Tree Lodge No. 817 has left its mark in very special ways.

The Pine Tree Lodge was created Oct. 21, 1917, with 28 members witnessing its formation. Charter members included: Adolph B. Friedman, Myer Minsky, Max S. Kominsky, Maurice Rosen, Louis Goldberg, Louis M. Pastor, Harry H. Epstein, Abraham Segal, Robert R. Cohen, Hyman Davis, Samuel Cohen Jr., Max Striar, Samuel Kurson, Joseph A. Byer, Abraham Rudman, Eli Adelman, Simon Cohen, Samuel B. Ross, Samuel H. Goldberg, Cyrus Schiro, Jacob M. Ross, Daniel Wagman, Charles J. Bernstein, Samuel E. Cummings, Abraham Brown, James Striar, Myer W. Epstein and I. Cutler.

In the beginning B'nai B'rith was an organization primarily for community members to help one another: by visiting each other and each other's families in the hospital, by sending flowers when there was a death, by aiding local Jewish families in financial trouble. But as time went on, the purpose of B'nai B'rith included much more. The years from 1917 to 1950 were witness to Pine Tree Lodge's indomitable civic spirit, political spirit and religious spirit as its projects included overseeing the local chapter of AZA, the University of Maine Hillel and the anti-defamation league.

Time and time again B'nai B'rith was there when there was any sort of sickness or strife. Members sponsored an auction to raise funds for the Polio Drive; conducted an Overseas Clothing Drive; donated to the local Anti-Tuberculosis fund; aided the Bangor Sanitarium; dedicated a Day Room at the Dow Field Hospital; donated to the Maine Cancer Society; sold war bonds; gave blood to the Red Cross; engaged in Civil Defense services; equipped recreational facilities for armed forces; adopted an orphan; and brought a German refugee to Bangor in the 1930s.

It was the Pine Tree Lodge that was responsible for enhancing the quality of life for so many in Bangor; with annual picnics for local Jewish children; with services for Passover broadcast over WLBZ radio; by entertaining Jewish UMO students; by funding the Bangor Hebrew Institute; giving Christmas parties to the veterans at Dow Base Hospital; welcoming home Jewish veterans; supporting the Bangor High



Five of the founding members of the B'nai B'rith Pine Tree Lodge are (left to right) Israel Cutler, Max Kominsky, Abraham Rudman (standing), Sam Cummings and Myer Minsky.

School ROTC; donating a prize for the best essay by a Bangor High School student each year; and sending a Hillel student to camp each summer.

And every cent was raised through activities that became outstanding social events of the Jewish year: New Year's Eve balls; Valentine's dances; costume parties; minstrel shows; plays; Purim carnivals; smokers; suppers; dinners; banquets; lectures; and, of course, the annual installations where distinguished speakers included the chief German interpreter at the Nuremberg Trials; a noted Jewish humorist and a longtime leader in the Zionist-Palestine appeal.

The Pine Tree Lodge found itself taking stands on everything from decrying publicly the permitting of former World War II Nazi soldiers to act as guards at Displaced Persons Camps; to sending a telegram to a Maine senator in Washington requesting his approval on a bill before Congress to open immigration to Palestine; to leading the Zionist movement in Bangor; to educating the public on prejudice and ADL activities.

The future of B'nai B'rith lies in the hands and hearts of Bangor's Jewry. But whether the Pine Tree Lodge is visibly thriving with meetings, speakers and festivities, or quietly lending its protection and its aid whenever and wherever it is called for — one thing remains clear: as current President Bernard Miller ascertains — B'nai B'rith will always be here when it's needed.

By Ruth-Ellen Cohen



In memory of all of our dearly
departed many of whom were
very instrumental in the
founding of our synagogue and
others who helped keep it alive
and vital for these 100 years.

Beth Israel Synagogue

In Loving Memory

Harold R. "Harry" Epstein
January 5, 1905 - August 18, 1987



Mrs. Ruth F. Epstein
Eleanor and Stanley Israel and Family
Gail and Bernard Kansky and Family